

## For Immediate Release

December 17, 2010

**Media Contact:** Christine Rambo, V.P.  
NLEP Communications & Corporate Affairs  
(W) 318.677.2531 (C) 318.537.0703 or [crambo@nlep.org](mailto:crambo@nlep.org)

### **Merger Officially Creates A New Regional Economic Development Group**



**(Shreveport-Monroe, La.)** Two economic development groups officially tie the knot in a signing ceremony, December 17, 2010, creating a regional economic development organization which local business and elected leaders say will have significant benefits for all of North Louisiana. North Louisiana Economic Partnership will serve 14 parishes in North Louisiana, including Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Jackson, Lincoln, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Red River, Sabine, Union

and Webster Parishes.

“This is a historic day for all of North Louisiana,” said Kyle McDonald, co-Chair of NLEP. “The Northwest Louisiana Economic Development Foundation which serves Northwest Louisiana and the North Louisiana Economic Development Corporation which serves five parishes in the northeast region began a dialogue to consider merging nearly two years ago. Today is the realization of a lot of hard work and determination by many leaders in communities across our region.”

On November 9, 2010, the membership of both organizations voted overwhelmingly to go forward with the merger. The signing of the merger papers officially seals the deal with the merger going into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011.

Even before the finalization of the merger, the two organizations began working together in September 2009 under the trade name of North Louisiana Economic Partnership. The collaboration has already proven successful. In just 2010, NLEP completed nine successful projects that resulted in an estimated 1,386 new and retained jobs and a projected \$127.7 million in capital investment over the coming years.

Among some of the successes this year include CQMS Razer which purchased the old Hendrix foundry in Mansfield, Louisiana. NLEP facilitated the negotiations between the two companies and local partners. As a result of the acquisition, the foundry retained 84 jobs and is now expanding to create more than 200 new jobs.

“By forming one large regional group, we can pool our resources together and maximize our opportunities,” said Joe Holyfield, co-Chair of NLEP. “Our expanded region has more assets to offer. Combined the 14 parishes have nearly 800,000 residents, which is the same size as the Baton Rouge market. We now have 12 colleges and universities along the I-20 and I-49 corridors.”

In addition to attracting and recruiting new companies, NLEP also supports existing companies, like CenturyLink, a fortune 500 telecom company in North Louisiana. NLEP's workforce marketing program, NEON, is helping the company recruit technology workers as it expands its Monroe headquarters.

NLEP is a non-profit economic development marketing organization, promoting 14 parishes in North Louisiana as a desirable and profitable business location. The NLEP and its many partners work with both existing companies and prospective employers to encourage job creation and capital investment as a way to build a strong and thriving economy.

###