

# JEDCO JOURNAL

JEFFERSON PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION - VOLUME I, 2007

## JEDCO Celebrates 20 Years of Service in Jefferson Parish

**J**EDCO is proud to celebrate 20 years of service. Over those years, JEDCO, in cooperation with public and private partnerships, set higher goals, produced faster growth and built a stronger economy in Jefferson Parish by assisting thousands of companies through business incubators, loan programs, tax incentives and rebates, workforce development and information services. While dedicated to assisting Jefferson Parish businesses, JEDCO's efforts also target the recruitment of new businesses for the area.

Since our inception in 1987, we have helped to create and retain thousands of jobs and generate millions of dollars in private investment for Jefferson Parish. To date, JEDCO has approved over 240 business loans with an estimated impact exceeding \$400 million dollars annually.

In the spring of 1989, JEDCO opened its first business

**(Story continues on page 2)**



Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard introduces keynote speaker Donald Powell, Federal Coordinator of Gulf Coast Rebuilding at the JEDCO 20th Anniversary Luncheon.

## Jefferson Parish Leads Nation in Job Growth

**F**or the quarter ending September 30, 2006, Jefferson Parish had the highest annual percentage increase in employment among the largest parishes/counties in the U.S., according to data just released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO) noted that the data shows Jefferson Parish experienced a year-to-date (September 2005 to September 2006) employment gain of 22.4 percent, compared with national job growth of 1.5 percent.

"Despite the national perception that the Greater New Orleans area is still 'stuck on stuck,' these figures prove that Jefferson Parish is booming and is not only recovered but is growing at rates that are stronger compared to our pre-Katrina economy. These figures show that Jefferson is not only back, but we are stronger and better than ever," said Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard.

Jefferson, now the largest parish in the state of Louisiana, has been this region's economic recovery center since Katrina. Between September 1, 2005 and January 31, 2007, Jefferson Parish has added 3,414 net new businesses, some of which are associated with the recovery and rebuilding of the Metro New Orleans region. JEDCO was the first to open two Business Recovery Centers, in conjunction with Louisiana Economic Development, servicing about 16,000 businesses.

"JEDCO statistics demonstrate that companies are taking advantage of incentives from the Gulf Opportunity Zone as well as state incentives to expand existing operations or to establish new facilities, saving companies millions of dollars," said JEDCO Executive Director Lucien Gunter. "In 2006, JEDCO worked with more than 200 companies utilizing these incentives which will result in the creation of an estimated 10,000 new jobs within two years and generating almost \$400 million in private investments in the parish. This new data is an indication that Jefferson Parish is not just moving forward – but that we are moving beyond Hurricane Katrina."

## JEDCO Celebrates 20 Years (Story continues from page 1)

incubator on the east bank of Jefferson Parish. It accommodated small businesses at one location by pooling resources and allowing emerging businesses to obtain critical services at a reasonable rate. The business incubators helped create jobs and assist budding entrepreneurs, graduating almost 200 new businesses into the Jefferson Parish economy.

With a changing economy and fierce competition among communities nationwide and abroad, JEDCO took the offensive to keep its resident companies in the parish and help them grow. As a result, the Business Retention and Expansion Program was launched in September, 1998 and since has become one of JEDCO's most successful programs. It has been nationally recognized for excellence.

JEDCO has its sights set for the future, finalizing the donation of 40 acres dedicated for the Churchill Business and Technology Park. Clearing and surcharge is complete and initial infrastructure construction will begin this year. The park will house the Patrick Taylor Science and Technology School, the Technology Incubator and JEDCO's Administrative Offices.

In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck, forever changing our region, but not changing our mission. It motivated JEDCO to reach higher, implementing new programs to assist our businesses in Jefferson Parish.

In Katrina's aftermath, JEDCO, the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce and Jefferson Business Council opened two Business Recovery Centers, which processed over 13,000 assistance applications, established a Jefferson Back to Business Call Center with critical assistance from ATMOS Energy and worked with our business development allies to conduct job fairs, a series of business recovery assistance briefings, and informative seminars — all of them free and designed to aid Jefferson Parish businesses and its residents.

This past year has been by far, the most challenging for JEDCO, but we have demonstrated resiliency and sustained teamwork that have enabled us to reach many of our goals and to formulate new ones in the Katrina-altered landscape.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Jefferson Parish has emerged as the largest and strongest economic engine in the state. Jefferson Parish's population has remained at near pre-Katrina levels since the storm and her residents can look back on the recent past and be proud of all that we have accomplished.

While these projects accelerate growth of industry in Jefferson Parish, JEDCO plans aggressive marketing campaigns focusing on development of these new resources to attract new companies and retain existing ones. Currently, Jefferson Parish boasts over 32,000 registered businesses. To support their growth and success, marketing JEDCO's incentives, workshops and financial programs will continue to enhance Jefferson Parish's business growth.

## Spotlight On: Green Earth Fuels, LLC



Jefferson Parish continues to garner interest from new industries outside of this region. Now it seems that the biodiesel industry has placed Jefferson Parish firmly on their radar screen. This was confirmed when Green Earth Fuels, LLC., a Houston based biodiesel producer chose Jefferson Parish as the home for their first facility outside of the Houston area.

Biodiesel fuel, which is derived from biological sources such as soybean oil, is gaining popularity as an alternative fuel. This is due to the availability of vegetable oils such as soybean and the ability to use biodiesel in diesel engine vehicles without modification to the engine. Jefferson's proximity to the river make it an attractive location as much of the soybean product from North Louisiana is being shipped downriver. Additionally, Green Earth's partnership with Kinder Morgan – Delta Terminals has made their decision an easy one.

Green Earth will lease land from Kinder Morgan where they will construct additional storage tanks and install equipment resulting in about \$25,000,000 in capital expenditures. "The co-location of our production facility with the Kinder Morgan terminal places us directly within the petroleum supply chain, creating a seamless integration with customers," said Gregory L. Bafalis, CEO. The company is expected to create 14 new direct jobs with an average salary of \$65,000 and approximately 30 indirect jobs. Green Earth also has plans to double capacity in Jefferson if successful.

However, Green Earth Fuels isn't the only biodiesel producer with plans in Jefferson Parish. In recent months, Jefferson Parish has entertained several prospects seeking to capitalize on Jefferson Parish's unique assets.

# JEDCO Scorecard

## 2007 CUMULATIVE REPORT — 1st Quarter

PROGRAM	<u>Companies</u>	<u>Jobs Created</u>	<u>New Jobs High Wage</u>	<u>Jobs Retained</u>	<u>Jobs Retained High Wage*</u>	<u>Private Investment</u>
Retention Program & Incentives	50	981		536		\$276,217,956
Incubator Program	5	4	3	33	12	\$75,000
Business Loans	3	12		705		\$3,661,907
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1,274</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>\$279,954,863</b>

\* Total does not include Port activities

## Jefferson Parish promotes Family Gras 2007

This past February, Jefferson Parish celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> year of Mardi Gras by kicking off Family Gras 2007, a three-day event including music, costuming and family fun. Live bands filled the air followed by the excitement of the carnival “krewes” celebrating Louisiana’s “joie de vivre.” This festival showcased the outstanding talents of local and national touring groups including Tony Orlando, Kellie Pickler and the Imagination Movers.

Crowd estimates place attendance at about 2,000 people on Friday and close to 6,000 on both Saturday and Sunday. The crowds, which spilled into the street on Saturday and Sunday, ranged in age from toddlers to seniors were attracted by the variety of the line-up. Family Gras will return in 2008 with plans to expand the event to the westbank of Jefferson Parish.



Kellie Pickler entertained thousands of spectators at the first annual Jefferson Parish Family Gras 2007 in Metairie.

## JEDCO Announces 2007 Board of Commissioners

The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO) recently announced its 2007 Board of Commissioners.

Serving as board officers for 2007 are **David Andignac** (Chairman), **Ray Seamon** (Vice-Chairman), **David Martin** (Treasurer) and **Joe Ewell** (Secretary). Other board members for 2007 include: **Manny Blanco, Jimmy Baum, Tina Dandry-Mayes, Eddie A. Doucet, Jim Garvey, Glenn Hayes, Beverly Stuntz, Paul Hurley, Mike Jacobs, Mayor Tim Kerner, Hon. Vinicio Madrigal, MD, Lynda Nugent Smith, Bill Peperone, Pat Rooney, Scott Schellhaas, and Stacey Shane-Schott.**

The JEDCO Board of Commissioners is comprised of 21 members. (One JEDCO Board position is currently vacant.) The Jefferson Parish Council nominates seven members, the Jefferson Parish president appoints one representative, and 13 board appointees represent area business organizations.

Business representatives serve five years, with representatives of the parish council and president serving for the duration of their nominator’s term in office.



David Andignac, 2007 JEDCO Chairman



# JEDCO Welcomes New Employees

JEDCO recently welcomed three new employees, Judy Horner, Lacey A. Guidry and Bess Renfrow.

**Judy Horner** has been hired as an administrative assistant for JEDCO's Enterprise Center West. Horner formally worked at Meadowcrest Hospital for 15 years where her duties included workers comp program and injuries related to business and industry. She later became the community relations coordinator for the hospital, educating the community and physicians with health related topics.

At JEDCO, Horner will be responsible for administrative support services and assisting the Enterprise Center West, maintaining monthly and quarterly reports of the incubator, usage of equipment, and current tenants list.



Judy Horner, Administrative Assistant

**Lacey A. Guidry** has been hired as economic development specialist under the business outreach department of JEDCO. She comes to JEDCO with four years of experience after earning a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of New Orleans.

Prior to joining the JEDCO team, Guidry worked for the Jefferson Parish Planning Department as a Planner II aiding customers with property inquiries, zoning change requests and conducting zoning/text studies of the parish's Code of Ordinances.

At JEDCO, Guidry will be responsible for coordinating economic development projects, maintaining the real estate database and conducting on-site interviews with businesses.

**Bess Renfrow** has been hired as executive assistant to JEDCO's executive director. She will be responsible for maintaining JEDCO's informational library and preparing reports for JEDCO's Board of Commissioners and the Jefferson Parish Council.



Lacey A. Guidry, Economic Development Specialist

Renfrow attended Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, LA where she graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. After moving to New Orleans, Renfrow pursued graduate studies at the University of New Orleans in Urban Planning with a specialization in Economic Development.

Formerly, Renfrow was assistant branch manager for Fidelity Homestead where she was instrumental in opening a new branch. Renfrow is actively involved in the community where she volunteers with the Green Project.



Bess Renfrow, Executive Assistant

## Chisesi Brothers Meat Packing Company Moves to Elmwood

Aided by an SBA 504 loan and incentives passed as part of the Gulf Opportunity Zone legislation, Chisesi Brothers has made an investment in Jefferson Parish in excess of \$6 million. The company has purchased the former Sav-a-Center warehouse on Jefferson Highway with plans to consolidate operations in Jefferson Parish. The company plans to make additional capital improvements as well as eventually expanding employment to exceed 200.

While best known for their "Chisesi Pride" hams, the company also specializes in sausages, chili, poultry and other provisions. Chisesi Brothers is seeking USDA certification which will allow the company to enter new markets outside the State of Louisiana.



# Louisiana Business Recovery Grants and Loans

Intermediaries working with Louisiana Economic Development (LED) officials received more than 5,000 applications for Louisiana Business Recovery Grants, along with more than 1,000 loan applications to date. LED partnered with several agencies statewide, including JEDCO, which set up two local intake centers on the east and west banks of Jefferson Parish. JEDCO processed approximately 1,100 applications for grants and 250 loan applications which accounted for approximately twenty percent of the state's total applications.

"Our intake centers did a great job of walking people through the grant process and ensuring they understood the eligibility requirements for this program," said Michael Hecht, LED director of business assistance. "As a result, it looks like most of those who applied are not only eligible but likely to receive grants. We are looking forward to being able to award a significant number of grants from the applicant pool. This phase of assistance should enable many Louisiana small businesses to help move the recovery forward."

Grant award letters were mailed on Tuesday, April 3rd to the more than 3,600 business owners approved for the initial phase of the Business Recovery Grant and Loan Program. JEDCO staff worked closely as a team to evaluate applications within allotted response deadlines. Moreover, JEDCO collaborated with regional Small Business Development Centers to ensure accurate information flowed to applicants.

Loan applicants can still call the toll free helpline, 1-877-217-1777, or visit [www.LouisianaForward.com](http://www.LouisianaForward.com) to ensure submission of complete loan applications. Loan applications will continue to be accepted until the \$4,250,000 allocated to JEDCO is expended.

## Company Spotlight: DocuMart

JEDCO recently assisted DocuMart with the financing of a five color offset press through its EDA loan program. It is anticipated that the new press will help the company meet current demand for larger prints and increased color range, therefore enhancing its competitive advantage. The company's headquarters is located at 5624 Citrus Boulevard in the Elmwood Industrial Park and has a branch office in the City of Gretna. Present management has successfully operated the business since its inception in 1980.

DocuMart provides a wide range of copying services, including manuals, reports, oversized engineering plans, litigations briefs and self-service copying. Printing services include business cards, letterhead, brochures, catalogs, posters, flyers, carbonless forms and thermography (raised printing). Bindery services include folding, padding, perforating and numbering.



## Diamond Data Systems Wins PC Magazine's Top 20

Diamond Data Systems announced that it is a winner of the first annual SMB 20 Awards hosted by *PC Magazine*, the leading technology publication in the United States. The award honors the most technologically innovative small and medium sized businesses of the year. A combination of key innovative technologies came together after Hurricane Katrina allowing Diamond Data Systems to not just survive, but ultimately experience record breaking growth. This award is to salute the firm's ingenuity, spirit, and "Failure is Not an Option" attitude. The SMB 20 Award winners were featured in the October 17, 2006 issue of *PC Magazine*.

"Small and medium sized businesses drive today's economy; however, they often don't get the attention and recognition they deserve," says *PC Magazine* Editor-in-Chief Jim Louderback. "*PC Magazine* is pleased to honor and highlight the hard work, technological leadership and innovative spirit of the SMB 20 winners."

Diamond Data Systems, Inc. is a leading provider of high value Information Technology (IT) solutions that include IT strategy, software engineering, network infrastructure design, information assurance & security, IT contracting, and IT outsourcing. DDS has delivered these solutions to enterprises in a variety of industries including US Department of Defense, Dept of Navy, Federal agencies, the State of Louisiana, local governments, and commercial enterprises.

# JEDCO 2007 Board of Commissioners

## Commissioner

**David Andignac, Chairman**  
**Ray Seamon, Vice-Chairman**  
**David Martin, Treasurer**  
**Joe Ewell, Secretary**  
**Manny Blanco**  
**Jimmy Baum**  
**Tina Dandry-Mayes**  
**Eddie Doucet**  
**Jim Garvey**  
**Glenn Hayes**  
**Beverly Stuntz**  
**Paul Hurley**  
**Mike Jacobs**  
**Tim Kerner**  
**Hon. Vinicio Madrigal, MD**  
**Lynda Nugent Smith**  
**Bill Peperone**  
**Pat Rooney**  
**Scott Schellhaas**  
**Stacey Shane-Schott**  
*Vacant*

## Nominating Organization

Jefferson Parish District 1, Chris Roberts  
Jefferson Chamber of Commerce-Westbank  
Jefferson Parish Councilman at Large, Division B, Tom Capella  
Jefferson Parish District 3, Byron Lee  
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana  
Elmwood Business Association  
Women Business Council Gulf Coast  
Jefferson Parish District 2, Elton Lagasse  
Committee for Better Jefferson  
Jefferson Chamber of Commerce-Eastbank  
Harvey Canal Industrial Association  
Jefferson Parish District 5, Jennifer Sneed  
Jefferson Parish President, Aaron Broussard  
J.P. Marine Fisheries Advisory Board  
Jefferson Parish Councilman at Large, Division A, John F. Young  
N.O. Metropolitan Association of Realtors  
Jefferson Parish District 4, Louis J. Congemi  
Home Builders Association of Greater N.O.  
East Jefferson Business Association  
Apartment Association of Greater N. O.  
Jefferson Area Business Alliance

## JEDCO Staff

**Lucien Gunter**  
*Executive Director*  
**Bess Renfrow**  
*Executive Assistant*

### Business Outreach

**Dottie B. Stephenson**  
*Deputy Director—Business Outreach*  
**Jerry Bologna**  
*Director of Economic Development Services*  
**Scott Rojas**  
*Marketing and Public Relations Manager*  
**Margo Ruiz**  
*Economic Information and Incentive Coordinator*  
**Lacey Guidry**  
*Economic Development Specialist*

### Operations

**Gaye A. Frederic**  
*Deputy Director—Operations*

### Business Incubator

**Judy Horner**  
*Administrative Assistant*

### Business Financing

**Alberto Queral**  
*Financing Manager*  
**Jessica Hinton**  
*Operations Manager*  
**Carol Braud**  
*Loan Servicing Assistant*

### Administration

**Cynthia Grows**  
*Controller*  
**Debbie Ritter**  
*Office Manager*  
**Del Ruiz**  
*Receptionist*

### Port & Public Affairs

**Pete Chocheles**  
*Director of Port & Public Affairs*  
*The Jefferson EDGE*



JEFFERSON PARISH ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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