

Avondale shipyard owner explores partnership

By: Greg LaRose, Editor April 11, 2014 0

The owner of Avondale Shipyard is considering a partnership with a major energy industry company to redevelop the West Bank facility that's being shut down as a ship fabrication site.

Huntington Ingalls Industries announced today it will conduct a six-month study with Kinder Morgan Energy Partners to explore new uses for the shipyard.

Kinder Morgan is the U.S. energy industry's largest midstream company, specializing in the transportation of oil and gas by pipeline. It owns or operates approximately 80,000 miles of pipeline and 180 terminals.

CityBusiness has learned that the study will determine whether the Avondale site can be converted into a terminal. The property is also being considered for warehousing and a possible manufacturing site.

Huntington-Ingalls announced in July 2010 it would end shipbuilding operations at Avondale and consolidate those services as its Pascagoula, Miss., facility. Since then, the company has sought alternative uses for the property, with an emphasis placed on energy sector options in the past year.

According to a statement from Huntington Ingalls, it "may pursue the formation of a joint venture to re-purpose the Avondale site" once the study is finished and a project is determined to be economically feasible.

The regional economic development group Greater New Orleans Inc., issued a joint statement with the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission upon learning of the study.

"Huntington Ingalls' engagement of Kinder Morgan to conduct a joint study on future opportunities is a clear and positive step forward in securing the future of Avondale shipyard," GNO Inc. President and CEO Michael Hecht said. "We look forward to continuing to work with our partners ... to ensure that Avondale shipyard remains not only open, but that it maximizes its future potential by capitalizing on the nascent energy boom in Louisiana."

"This joint study is a very positive development for the Avondale Shipyard and for Jefferson Parish," JEDCO Executive Director Jerry Bologna said. "During this six-month study, Huntington Ingalls and the Kinder Morgan team will look at best uses for the site and the business development opportunities that make sense for them."

Huntington, Kinder Morgan Energy exploring future uses for Avondale Shipyard



Huntington, Kinder Morgan Energy exploring future uses for Avondale Shipyard

Posted on April 11, 2014 at 8:43 AM

Updated Friday, Apr 11 at 9:08 AM

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Email: webteam@wwltv.com | **Twitter:** [@WWLTV](https://twitter.com/WWLTV)

Avondale Shipyard might just have life left after all.

Huntington Ingalls Industries, which owns Avondale, will conduct a study with Kinder Morgan Energy Partners to learn the best use for the facility.

Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., said a partnership could add up to 1,000 jobs at the redeveloped shipyard.

“I’m optimistic that this partnership will go forward and new high-paying jobs will be available as our state continues to lead the country in this new energy renaissance,” said Landrieu, whose phone call was part of the process to initiate discussions. “With new pipelines and more middle class jobs, our state taps into new potential of energy production.”

Sen. David Vitter, R-La., meanwhile, said redeveloping Avondale would be an “incredible boost” for the state.

“You really can’t beat Avondale’s location, and the top notch facilities should make it an attractive investment for HHI and Kinder Morgan Energy Partners,” he said in a released statement.

Avondale is served by truck, rail and sea access. The facility has been used to build to build ships while Huntington designs, builds and maintains nuclear and non-nuclear ships for the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard.”

THE ADVOCATE

Companies to study possible new uses for Avondale Shipyard

BY JEFF ADELSON

jadelson@theadvocate.com

April 14, 2014
0 Comments

The first glimmer of hope for a turnaround at Avondale Shipyard, which has been in the midst of a slow-motion shutdown for nearly four years, came Friday as Huntington Ingalls Industries announced it was embarking on a six-month study with one of the country's largest pipeline and terminal companies to come up with potential uses for the West Bank site.

Advocate staff photo by JOHN McCUSKER -- The city of New Orleans can be seen in the distance from the perspective of Avondale.

The partnership between Huntington Ingalls and Kinder Morgan Energy Partners does not promise any concrete plans for the facility, and even if it meets the hopes of some supporters, it still would leave the 75-year-old shipyard employing far fewer workers than it did in its heyday as one of the New Orleans area's major economic engines.

Even so, officials said they believe the proposal is one of the most tangible to be presented since a 2010 announcement the shipyard would be closed for good, and it could spur other companies to take a look at the facility.

"My sense is this is a real and significant step forward. It has real potential and it's a serious first step toward a possibly long-term joint venture between Kinder Morgan and Huntington Ingalls," Jefferson Parish President John Young said. "Both corporations are very serious about it and have a serious game plan."

The study will encompass a range of potential uses for the shipyard, including manufacturing and terminal operations, said Beci Bernton, corporate spokeswoman for Huntington Ingalls. If a partnership proves to be economically viable, the two companies could form a joint venture to redevelop the site.

"We've been aggressively pursuing all opportunities to redevelop Avondale," Bernton said.

There are now 740 workers employed at Avondale, a dramatic drop from the 5,000 who worked there several years ago. Plans call for those workers to remain employed through most of 2014, though their future beyond that is uncertain.

About 138 engineers working at a University of New Orleans facility at the shipyard would remain employed, Bernton said.

In a release announcing the proposal, U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., said the plan could create 1,000 jobs. While higher than the number working there now, that would still be less than the 1,500 the shipyard employed a year ago.

And, with the study not even started, Bernton said there was no way to predict how many jobs might in the end be created there.

"It really depends on whether the study comes up with feasible and economical uses and what those uses will be," she said.

Landrieu, who took credit in a news release for bringing the companies together, said a partnership would further the development of energy infrastructure in New Orleans.

“I’m optimistic that this partnership will go forward, and new high-paying jobs will be available as our state continues to lead the country in this new energy renaissance,” Landrieu said.

Sen. David Vitter, R-La., also struck an optimistic tone in a news release about the study.

“Redeveloping Avondale would be an incredible boost to Louisiana’s economy,” Vitter said. “You really can’t beat Avondale’s location, and the top-notch facilities should make it an attractive investment for HII and Kinder Morgan Energy Partners.”

The study would not be the first time officials have expressed hope for redevelopment of the site, though some said there was reason to be optimistic that this proposal could actually result in progress.

“This is the most open and forthcoming Huntington Ingalls has been in their negotiation process, and we’re going to continue to keep pushing Huntington Ingalls to capitalize on all that Avondale and Louisiana have to offer,” a Landrieu aide said.

Avondale’s recent woes go back to 2010, when defense contractor Northrop Grumman announced it would shutter the facility, which traditionally built military vessels, by 2013 and move its shipbuilding operations to Pascagoula, Miss. The company later spun off its shipbuilding operations into Huntington Ingalls, which extended operations at Avondale slightly.

In the meantime, both the company and local elected officials have been scrambling to come up with new uses for the site, with a particular focus on luring companies that manufacture pipelines, rigs or other equipment for the oil and gas industry. None of those efforts has borne fruit.

“Avondale’s been reluctant to sublease their facility because they were looking at a bigger vision. The partnership with Kinder Morgan brings a lot of synergy, and they certainly are a major player,” Young said.

A partnership like that could spur other development on the site, said Young, who has lobbied state and federal officials to support efforts to repurpose Avondale. That could include more manufacturing and the use of some portions of the shipyard for warehouses.

“It’s certainly very positive news,” Young said. “It’s certainly not a done deal, but the potential out there is tremendous.”



Much support, few facts about study to redevelop Avondale Shipyard



Avondale Shipyard in June, 2013. The 75-year-old facility cut staff but remained open despite rumors that it would shut down in 2013. (Ted Jackson, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune)

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By [Jed Lipinski, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

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on April 11, 2014 at 2:20 PM, updated April 11, 2014 at 2:21 PM

The **announcement** that **Huntington Ingalls Industries** and **Kinder Morgan Energy Partners** have agreed to conduct a six-month study to determine a new use for Avondale Shipyard came with much fanfare Friday, but little actual information.

Officials at Kinder Morgan, a Houston-based company that specializes in the transport of oil and gas via pipeline, declined to comment on the nature of the study, saying that it is "too early" to discuss specifics.

Beci Brenton, a spokeswoman for Huntington Ingalls, which is based in Newport News, Va., but has its own Houston office, said that the study would evaluate the best use of the 75-year-old shipyard and make a determination as to its economic viability.

"But at this point," she said, "it is too premature to have much a discussion about it. The study will speak for itself in the end."

Since Huntington Ingalls took over the shipyard in February 2013 it has struggled to attract oil and gas contracts that would enable the facility to stay afloat. The announcement of the exploratory study with Kinder Morgan is the latest in series of potential development leads, none of which has come to fruition.

The value of Avondale as a political issue, however, was made clear in the outpouring of press releases that accompanied the announcement. U.S. Sens. Mary Landrieu, D-La., and David Vitter, R-La., both rushed to show their involvement in the future development of Avondale, once the largest employer in the state.

A release from Landrieu, who chairs the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said that she had "facilitated" a phone call between Huntington Ingalls and Kinder Morgan. Though the six-month study only commenced Friday, she suggested that the possible partnership "would create 1,000 new maritime jobs to Avondale Shipyard" and bring additional pipelines to the Louisiana Coast.

Vitter's office, meanwhile, took the opportunity to extol the senator's role in fighting the budget cuts to the Department of Defense and the U.S. Navy that resulted in the announcement, in 2010, that Avondale would close by the end of 2013. The shipyard remains open, though its **staff has been reduced** from around 5,000 in 2010 to around 600 today.

A meeting to discuss the status of the shipyard and possible paths forward has been scheduled for Monday (April 14), at Avondale's administration building.

According to Huntington Ingalls, the meeting is not open to the public. Attendees will include Avondale's site director Lou Hose, Jefferson Parish president John Young and JEDCO executive director Jerry Bologna, among others.



Jefferson Parish leaders optimistic about Avondale study

Updated: Apr 11, 2014 8:23 PM CDT <em class="wnDate">Friday, April 11, 2014 9:23 PM EDT

Written by: Sabrina Wilson - [email](#)



AVONDALE, LA (WVUE) - The owner of Avondale Shipyard will partner with an energy industry giant to explore ways to bring hundreds of jobs back to the shipyard that stretches along the Mississippi River, and Jefferson Parish political and business leaders are thrilled.

Avondale was once the largest private employer in the state. The shipbuilding facility propelled thousands of workers into the middle class, but it is no longer the job producer it once was. But Friday brought a new glimmer of hope for reviving Avondale.

"We've been working with Huntington-Ingalls, and Avondale executives to explore all kinds of different possibilities," said Jefferson Parish President John Young.

Huntington Ingalls, which owns Avondale, will conduct a six-month study with Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, L.P. to probe possibilities for infusing new life into Avondale.

"We're glad that keeping the pressure on Huntington to come up with a plan, and Kinder-Morgan now stepping in to it, we're encouraged by that," said Young.

It was welcome news for Todd Murphy, president of the Jefferson Chamber.

"A very large facility that really needs this study to come in and hopefully this is something that's really the beginning that will bring back those high quality jobs," said Murphy.

Sen. Mary Landrieu, who chairs the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, encouraged the two companies to explore ways to create 1,000 jobs for Avondale and also build more pipelines along the Gulf Coast.

"It's my understanding that it's a thousand, real quality, high-paying jobs, so it's the beginning of something great," Murphy said.

Young said myriad uses for Avondale will be considered.

"One could be to continue to manufacture, to go after the oil industry and the fabrication of offshore platforms, as well as fabrication of modular units for all of the investment up and down the Mississippi River," he said.

Parking lots outside the facility on Bridge City Avenue that once were filled with hundreds of vehicles are empty.

"It has really dried up a lot of that area. We need to bring that back," said Murphy.

At one time, Avondale reportedly had more than 25,000 workers. In 2010, there were 5,000 employees, and today, about 740, according to Huntington-Ingalls.

And now parish leaders are optimistic of a possible comeback, albeit not a return to the heyday of Avondale.

"What this shows is we now have a concrete path forward that will hopefully bring some economic development opportunities, and some additional job opportunities," said Young.

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Avondale owner to study new uses for shipyard

Updated: Apr 11, 2014 6:47 PM CDT <em class="wnDate">Friday, April 11, 2014 7:47 PM EDT



JEFF AMY

Shipbuilder Huntington Ingalls Industries said it will look at redeveloping its Avondale shipyard with a Texas-based pipeline company.

After a six-month study, the companies could form a joint venture to redevelop the shipyard near New Orleans, which otherwise is expected lay off most of its 740 employees this summer.

"The joint study will explore opportunities ranging from manufacturing to terminal operations," Huntington Ingalls spokeswoman Beci Brenton wrote in an email.

Houston-based Kinder Morgan Energy Partners is the nation's largest pipeline company, transporting petroleum products, natural gas and carbon dioxide. It also runs petroleum terminals and stores natural gas.

U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., said that the redevelopment could create 1,000 jobs. Her colleague, U.S. Sen. David Vitter, R-La., said he would meet with Huntington Ingalls and local officials Monday at the shipyard to discuss its current status and future.

Huntington Ingalls has been trying to transfer Avondale to someone who would redevelop it but has found no takers. Dependent on federal money to build warships, it's been under political pressure to find a new use for what had been the largest industrial employer in the New Orleans area.

The company is building parts of an amphibious assault ship, the future USS Portland, at Avondale. But that work is scheduled to wrap up this summer. Without a new user, Huntington Ingalls plans to keep a facility that employs 138 engineers but lay off most other workers.

Brenton said Avondale wouldn't close immediately but the company can't maintain it forever.

"Obviously, if we cannot find a redevelopment opportunity, we will be force to close the facility," Brenton wrote.

Northrop Grumman announced in 2010 that it would close Avondale, which then had 5,000 employees, and shift operations to its Pascagoula, Miss., shipyard. It later spun off those and other shipyard operations as Huntington Ingalls, based in Newport News, Va.

The company is also trying to reactivate its closed Waggaman, La., facility near Avondale for other kinds of commercial work, possibly employing 200. Waggaman, which closed in 2010, made components for Avondale ships.

"We believe our best, near-term opportunity to capture commercial work will be through the Waggaman facility," Brenton wrote.

There are about 11,000 employees in Pascagoula and another 500 at a composite fabrication facility in Gulfport, Miss., that Huntington Ingalls also plans to close.



Landrieu Brings Together Companies to Boost Jobs at Avondale Shipyard

April 11, 2014

WASHINGTON—Today, **U.S. Senator Mary L. Landrieu, D-La.**, chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, called Huntington Ingalls Institutes (HII) and Kinder Morgan together and encouraged company officials to discuss a possible partnership that would create 1,000 jobs to Avondale Shipyard in New Orleans, La. Additionally, the partnership would build additional pipelines along the Gulf Coast.

The Avondale Shipyard was acquired by HII in February 2013 in the hopes of transforming it into a major construction site of oilrig and refinery equipment. This phone call facilitated by Sen. Landrieu is the first step in forming an exploratory study by HII and Kinder Morgan to form a partnership and bring jobs to the Avondale Shipyard that will boost pipeline construction along Louisiana's coast.

"Today I brought together HII and Kinder Morgan to find a path forward for 1,000 new maritime jobs and further development of our energy infrastructure in New Orleans. I'm optimistic that this partnership will go forward and new high-paying jobs will be available as our state continues to lead the country in this new energy renaissance," **said Sen. Landrieu.** "With new pipelines and more middle class jobs, our state taps into new potential of energy production. Just a few days ago, I announced a new study that shows the importance of the maritime industry on our state's economy and I'm glad that today we're continuing to grow that industry and bring new energy to power the rest of our country."



Vitter Announces Positive News for Avondale Redevelopment

New study to explore redeveloping Avondale for Huntington Ingalls Industries, a shipbuilding company

Friday, April 11, 2014

(Metairie, La.) – U.S. Sen. David Vitter announced today that shipbuilding company Huntington Ingalls Industries will be looking into ways to possibly redevelop Avondale Shipyards. The company is announcing today they are conducting a study with Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, L.P. to review potential opportunities.

“Redeveloping Avondale would be an incredible boost to Louisiana’s economy,” Vitter said. “You really can’t beat Avondale’s location, and the top notch facilities should make it an attractive investment for HHI and Kinder Morgan Energy Partners.”

Vitter, a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, fought against the Department of Defense (DoD) and the U.S. Navy budget cuts that led to the closure of Avondale in 2010. Vitter has been working with local stakeholders and the DoD to find solutions since then.

Vitter will be attending a meeting at Avondale on Monday to discuss the current status of the shipyard and paths forward.

Additional attendees include:

Lou Hose, Site Director, Avondale Operations

John Young, Jefferson Parish President

Elton Lagasse, Jefferson Parish Council Chairman

Paul Johnston, Jefferson Parish Councilman

Chris Roberts, Jefferson Parish Councilman-At-Large, Division A

Jerry Bolonga, JEDCO Executive Director

Michael Hecht, GNO, Inc. President & CEO

THE ADVOCATE

Business Honors for April 13

April 13, 2014
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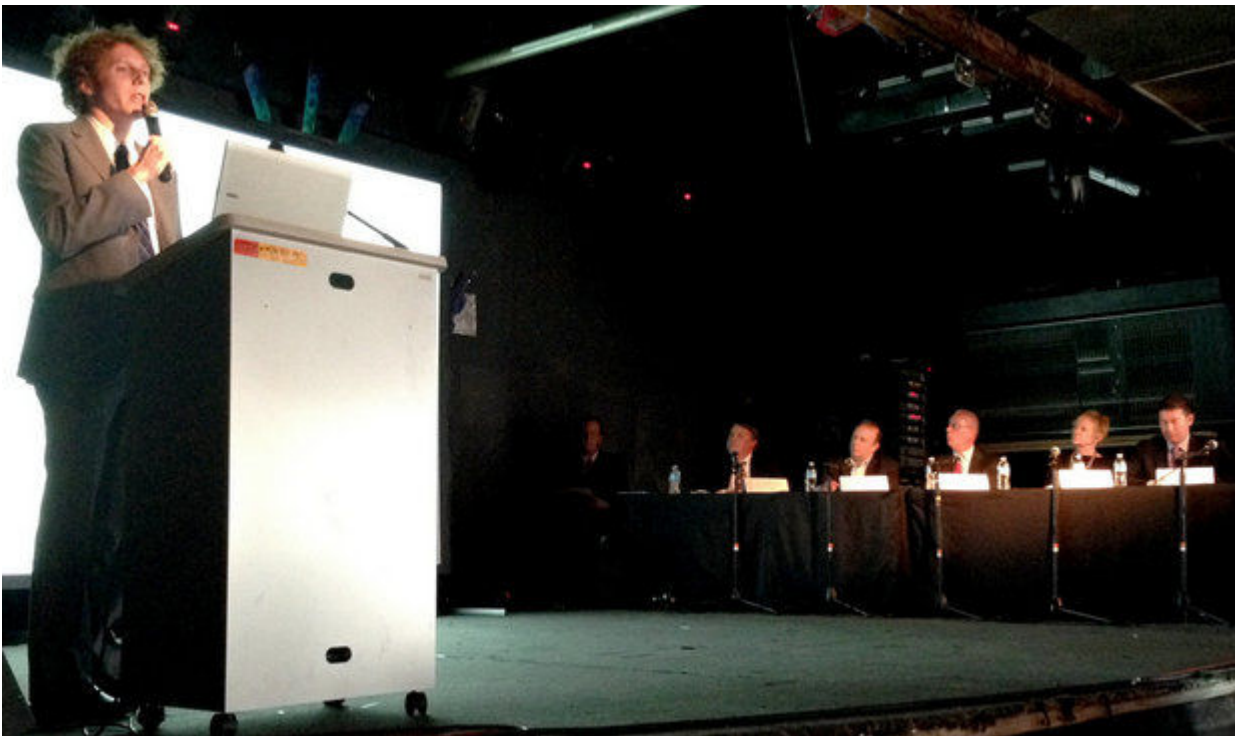
PortaVision Medical has won the second annual JEDCO Challenge held by the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission and First NBC Bank.

Founder Terry Ancar designed and manufactured the NeoRay Portable Digital X-Ray System after recognizing a need in neonatal care units.

Pre-term babies often can't handle the high level of radiation in X-ray devices used on adults. The NeoRay is a compact system designed to be used in Neonatal Intensive Care Units at the incubator.

The device was presented in the JEDCO Challenge pitch competition that included 44 applicants. PortaVision Medical won a prize worth almost \$80,000 in cash and various business services.

Video X-ray machine for treating premature infants wins the Jefferson Parish business challenge during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week



David Bode pitches the PortaVision video X-ray machine for treating premature infants during the JEDCO Challenge for startups with Jefferson Parish ties during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week 2014 on Tuesday, March 25. PortaVision ultimately won the judges' nod for a top prize of \$20,000 in cash and an array of donated professional services. *(Mark Waller, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune)*



By [Mark Waller, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

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on March 25, 2014 at 6:18 PM, updated March 25, 2014 at 6:36 PM

A company with a video X-ray device for use in treating premature infants won the **Jefferson Parish-based business competition** as part of **New Orleans Entrepreneur Week** on Tuesday (March 25), giving it a \$20,000 cash infusion and a raft of donated professional services.

Terry Ancar, president of PortaVision Medical, and David Bode, director of strategy and finance, said the monetary help is just what their enterprise needs to put the finishing touches on the technology and complete the process of securing patents.

"We needed that little, little bit of extra support," Bode said.

Bode said their product would allow doctors to conduct medical procedures on preemies, such as inserting catheters, with a live video feed to guide them in avoiding mistakes and having to make multiple attempts that can be traumatic for their fragile patients.

Such technology exists for adult patients, but the challenge, Ancar said, has been to shrink it for use on tiny babies. "It's been an uphill battle," he said.

Ancar, who spent his career running a medical imaging firm, has personally been developing the technology along with a colleague from his previous business and said it's almost finished.

This was the second year for the business **challenge sponsored by the Jefferson Economic Development Commission**. More than 100 people attended to watch the pitches at the Southport Hall nightclub near the New Orleans and Jefferson Parish line and the east bank of the Mississippi River. The idea of the competition is to support companies that have ties to Jefferson Parish or operations in the parish, presenting the prospect of bolstering the parish's economy if they grow.

Five companies took the stage to pitch their products or services. A panel of judges from a range of business realms asked them questions about how their products work, the costs they face, barriers to winning wide adoption of their products, their revenue models and plans for spreading awareness of their efforts in the relevant markets.



The winner last year was **Billy Bosch, founder of the Be Well Nutrition** company, which makes the health drink Iconic. He said Tuesday that the \$20,000 he won last year paid for another production run of his drink. Bosch also said he made connections with mentors through the event, which helped him refine his production to a point where he expects to be able to widen the distribution of Iconic to other parts of the

country.

JEDCO estimated that the total value of its prizes this years reached more than \$65,000, including the \$20,000 cash award and the donated professional services both for the winner and other participants.

The audience on Tuesday heard from four other finalists:

- ADVANO, a company by entrepreneur Alexander Girau that manufactures nanoparticles needed for lithium-ion batteries, medical uses such as gene therapy for cancer treatment and other technologies.
- The Collector, an Internet site by Alex Goss and Michael Angle that aims to help groups of people organize and track money collecting for activities such as fantasy football leagues, basketball championship brackets and vacations with friends.
- GetHealthy, a program by Blaine Lindsey for doctors, employers and insurance providers to encourage healthfulness among their patients, employees and policyholders.
- MobileQubes, a system of kiosks in travel hubs and other high-traffic locations that rent out batteries to preserve the usability of mobile phones, developed by Sean Carrigan, Jason Palmer and Mike Melito.

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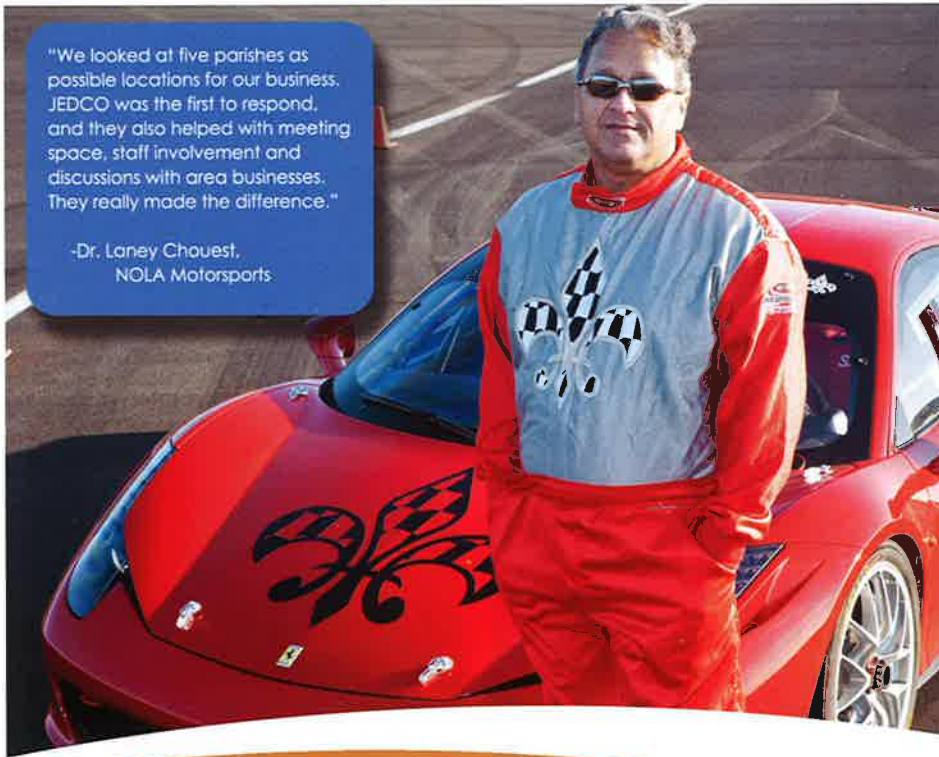
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-Dr. Loney Chouest,
NOLA Motorsports



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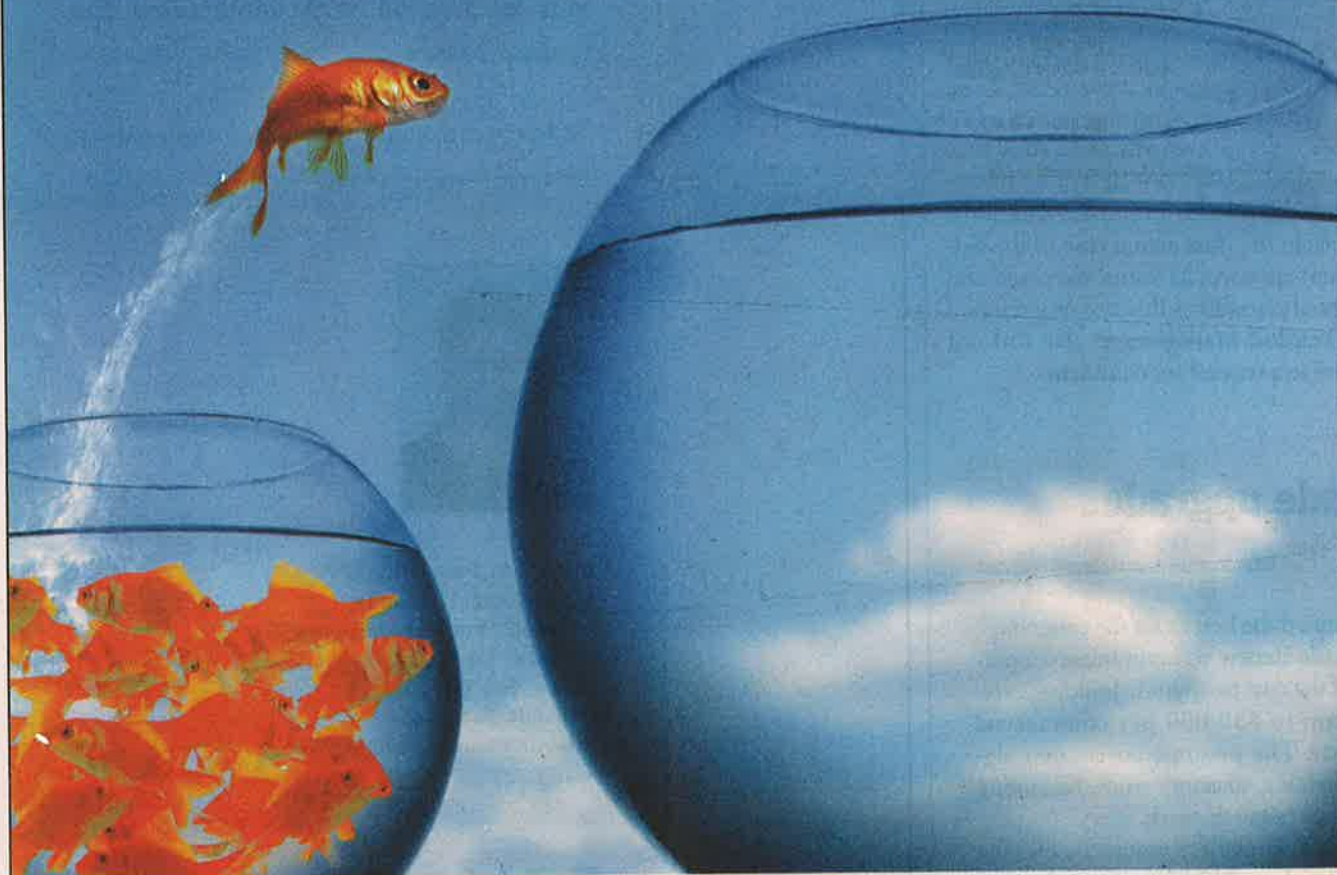
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What happened:

Louisiana strawberry farmers say it's not the exceptionally cold weather but last year's rainy winter that has cut into their strawberry crops, reducing what's being made available to local grocers and farmer's markets.



What's next:

The cold snaps aren't killing the strawberry harvests, merely delaying them, leading farmers to predict better crops for March and early spring.

What happened:

The Jefferson Parish Council approved a two-year agreement last week to hire a consultant to oversee the redevelopment of Fat City.

What's next:

The Jefferson Chamber Foundation will pay the consultant \$25,000 from taxes collected within the Metairie CBD for the area's economic development. The council stopped short of creating a government staff position, but the consultant could take part in handling code enforcement issues.

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