

Jefferson EDGE 2020

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Status Report 4: June 2012

Prepared by JEDCO and GCR Inc.

JEDCO
Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission



Economic Development

In response to concerns about quality of life in Jefferson Parish and its impact upon the community's economic competitiveness, JEDCO initiated the Jefferson Edge 2020 Quality of Life initiative. This initiative has produced eight "strategic implementation plans" which include a series of action items to address particular quality of life issues. Implementing the action items requires the total cooperation and keen interest of all involved, including JEDCO, the Jefferson Parish government, numerous other entities, and frequently State and Federal agencies. In 2008, JEDCO retained GCR & Associates, Inc. to prepare semiannual reports outlining the status of each of these action items and overall progress toward implementation.

The following table summarizes the progress made toward each of the economic development (ED) action items.

ED = Economic Development

Action ID #	Action Item	Progress as of June 2012		
		Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
JEDCO Action Items				
ED3	Continue to aggressively market the first 40 acres of the Churchill Technology and Business Park			
ED4	Identify partners and potential funding sources for Phase II development of the remaining 50 acres at the Churchill Technology and Business Park.			
ED9	Work closely with EJGH, Ochsner Health System, and WJGH to facilitate the expansion of medical facilities throughout the Parish.	This action item has been tabled indefinitely.		
ED15	Aggressively market Jefferson Parish as a headquarters for energy companies			
ED16	Continue to aggressively reach out to businesses in Jefferson Parish to support business retention, expansion, and access to capital			
ED17	Ensure that the Louisiana Small Business Development Center maintains a presence at the Churchill Technology and Business Park			
ED18	Seek permanent financing and support for an on-going marketing effort for Jefferson Parish			
ED19	Conduct a review of the Jefferson Parish permitting office to improve performance and to make the permitting process more business friendly.			
GNO Inc. Action Items				
ED5	Build upon existing efforts of GNO Inc. and commission a comprehensive study and action plan for the workforce development infrastructure in the New Orleans region			
ED10	Oppose changes in the federal tax code that would discourage off-shore oil and gas exploration			
ED11	Work to preserve funding in the federal defense budget for weapons systems that are produced in Jefferson Parish and in the New Orleans region			
ED13	Identify major national growth industries and the potential for locally based companies to capitalize on emerging economic opportunities			
ED14	Partner with the Port of New Orleans, GNO Inc., and the Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce (BRAC) to expand opportunities for international shipping and trade			
Regional Planning Commission (RPC) Action Items				
ED6	Support the development of a high speed rail line from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, with a stop in Jefferson Parish			
ED7	Support the implementation of transportation projects of regional significance, such as a light rail line to the Airport; improvement to the Earhart Expressway, and the construction of I-49			
ED8	Collaborate with major railroads and the Regional Planning Commission to implement the New Orleans Rail Corridor Gateway Study			
Jefferson Parish Planning Dept. Action Items				
ED1	Modify land use regulations and invest in infrastructure to develop an "Elmwood West" commercial and industrial node			
Jefferson Parish Film Dept. Action Items				
ED12	Collaborate with Jefferson's state legislative delegation to renew the state motion picture, digital media, music production, live theater, and motion picture infrastructure tax credits.			
City of Kenner Action Items				
ED2	Collaborate with the Airport to create a master plan for the redevelopment of "buyout" properties			

Economic Development

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JEDCO Action Items								
ED3	Continue to aggressively market the first 40 acres of the Churchill Technology and Business Park	On-going	<p>Steady progress continues in marketing the first phase of the Churchill Technology and Business Park. The land has been entirely cleared, but the land filling operation (to make parcels development ready) is not yet complete. This process began in December of 2011.</p> <p>JEDCO currently has dozens of leads for potential tenants of the Park and at least four strong prospects. Among these is a company that intends to move its headquarters and manufacturing operations to the Park. JEDCO is in advanced negotiations with this company.</p> <p>For additional leads and prospects, JEDCO has decided to focus primarily on industry site selectors, rather than on individual companies.</p> <p>Finally, construction of the Patrick F. Taylor Science & Technology Academy and Conference Center began in late 2011.</p>	Monitor the deposit of fill on development parcels. Continue aggressive outreach efforts. Work to translate leads into a site commitment. Establish benchmarks for performance and success.				
ED4	Identify partners and potential funding sources for Phase II development of the remaining 50 acres at the Churchill Technology and Business Park.	Identify funding and timetable by 2011	<p>There are a number of new developments regarding the second phase of the Churchill Technology and Business Park. As described in the previous status report (from July 2011), the process of filling the remaining 50 acres in order to make it development ready will soon begin in earnest.</p> <p>Second, Louisiana Economic Development (LED) has indicated that the Park will be a priority for the State's economic development efforts in 2012. This could mean a financial and administrative commitment in the development of phase II. Also, federal funds in the form of an Economic Development Administration (EDA) public works grant are currently being examined. There is a grant application due by September, 2012 which could potentially fund an access road for heavy trucks. This road would service the back 50 acres of the park, and it would also accommodate construction vehicles during site development. The maximum potential amount of the grant is \$1 million, but that size of grant would require a \$500,000 match from Parish government. Discussions are underway between JEDCO and the Parish regarding this match.</p>	Monitor the deposit of fill on development parcels. Work with LED to secure their active support in marketing the Park as well as any financial support from the State. Secure a commitment for the local match for the EDA grant, and submit an EDA public works grant application.				

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JEDCO Action Items							
ED9	Work closely with EJGH, Ochsner Health System, and WJGH to facilitate the expansion of medical facilities throughout the Parish.	On-going	No further activity at this time. Refer to July, 2011 status report for more information on Ochsner's expansion plans and on-going capital projects.	Continue to monitor capital needs and capital plans of major hospitals in the Parish. No immediate action is needed at this time.	This action item has been tabled indefinitely.		
ED15	Aggressively market Jefferson Parish as a headquarters for energy companies	Complete internal marketing strategy in 2009, 2010; initiate targeted outreach efforts to energy companies in 2010, 2011	<p>As of the last status report, JEDCO had met with the Marine Well Containment Company, the joint venture of the major oil companies, to discuss basing their worldwide operations at the Avondale shipyards site. In the past year, this idea has not come to fruition, as Huntington Ingalls is now looking at other suitors for the Avondale site.</p> <p>Another potential area of focus in the energy field is new high paying jobs through the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE). In the aftermath of the BP Horizon spill, a multitude of new government inspection and regulatory positions are being established in the New Orleans region. Employment (i.e. inspectors) at the Elmwood office has indeed increased over the past year, and salaries have also been adjusted upward. The salary adjustment has helped to reduce the disparity in BOEMRE pay that had existed between the Houston office and the New Orleans office.</p> <p>Another issue in the energy field that was discussed in the previous status report (from July 2011) is the acquisition of locally based energy firms from larger national firms—transactions that can result in the closure of local businesses in this industry. While JEDCO cannot interfere with these decisions, JEDCO can develop a plan of attack for meeting with the acquiring company as quickly as possible to convey to them the benefits of Jefferson and the New Orleans region. JEDCO has not, as of yet, finalized this strategy.</p> <p>Finally, at the Churchill Technology and Business Park, there have not been any substantive leads in the energy field, but the Park has attracted interest from a number of international firms in other industries that are looking to build their headquarters in Jefferson.</p>	<p>While not to the exclusion of other industries and other prospects, continue discussions with oil and gas companies to secure a first energy industry tenant at the Churchill Technology and Business Park.</p> <p>Develop a rapid response plan and communications strategy to communicate with companies from outside of the New Orleans region that decide to acquire smaller, Jefferson-based energy firms.</p>			

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ED16	Continue to aggressively reach out to businesses in Jefferson Parish to support business retention, expansion, and access to capital	On-going	<p>Over the past year, JEDCO has scored a number of significant victories in business recruitment. JEDCO recently secured commitments from Petrotech and Revolution Foods to move their operations to Jefferson Parish. Petrotech is moving its international headquarters to Elmwood, and Revolution is a national food manufacturer that will be making Kenner their seventh national location. Additionally, JEDCO is in advanced negotiations with a medical device manufacturer that is looking to relocate their headquarters to the Churchill Technology and Business Park.</p> <p>Another major retention project is the attempt to preserve shipbuilding jobs or other manufacturing jobs at Avondale. Huntington Ingalls is in negotiations with a new operator for the facility, but no deals have been finalized. A lucrative incentive package has been assembled, totaling \$214 million, from LED. Additionally, JEDCO, Entergy, and Atmos have proffered their own incentives.</p> <p>Following from the recommendation of the last status report (July 2011), JEDCO is working on two back office prospects that would create or retain up to 2,500 jobs in Jefferson.</p> <p>Two outstanding issues that have not been resolved since the last status report are discussions with Nucor about placing office functions in Jefferson Parish and, secondly, creating greater structure in the use of the Parish's economic development fund.</p>	<p>Continue to aggressively pursue a number of outstanding prospects to arrive at the commitment stage: the medical device manufacturing company and the two back office employers. Continue to work with Huntington Ingalls to secure a new use for Avondale.</p> <p>Continue dialogue with Nucor about a potential office in Jefferson to support their new facility in St. James Parish.</p> <p>Continue dialogue with Parish government about greater structure in the programming and disposition of the Parish's economic development fund.</p>			

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ED17	Ensure that the Louisiana Small Business Development Center maintains a presence at the Churchill Technology and Business Park	Initiate outreach in 2009; secure a partnership in 2010	JEDCO has not entered into a formal CEA with the SBDC, but through a verbal agreement with JEDCO, the SBDC has occupied space at the JEDCO headquarters and has provided valuable services to developing businesses. These services include one-on-one counseling with incubator tenants and others. Additionally, they have held workshops and seminars for incubator tenants and the general public.	Action item is complete. A formal CEA has not been necessary to establish a robust presence for the SBDC at the Churchill Technology and Business Park. Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the SBDC's efforts and preserve a strong working relationship between JEDCO and the SBDC.			
ED18	Seek permanent financing and support for an on-going marketing effort for Jefferson Parish	Conduct outreach and secure multi-year funding commitments in 2009, 2010	The public outreach campaign to support Jefferson EDGE 2020 has stalled in the past year due to budget shortfalls. Jefferson Life magazine, after a promising start, saw its advertising revenue wane. As a result, the magazine is on indefinite hold. Attempts to find a new publisher to purchase Jefferson Life have been unsuccessful to date. In the meantime, the Parish continues to maintain a Facebook presence.	Continue to maintain a social media presence. In an era of declining print publications, determine whether it makes sense to continue to pursue the concept of a community magazine. Continue to advocate for marketing dollars from past supporters—the Parish, school system, and Sheriff's office.			

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ED19	Conduct a review of the Jefferson Parish permitting office to improve performance and to make the permitting process more business friendly.	Initiate review in 2011. Finalize recommendations and begin to implement recommendations in 2012.	<p>At the direction of JEDCO's economic development strike force, ED19 is a new action item that was added to the Economic Development plan in 2011. The permitting process in any community is frequently its "front door" to the business and development community. There was a growing sense that Jefferson did not offer a permitting process that was sufficiently efficient and user-friendly.</p> <p>Consequently, the Parish administration convened a group of stakeholders (informally called the "Permitting Committee") to review the permitting process and recommend strategies for improvement. Along with the formation of the Committee, JEDCO commissioned GCR to prepare a report examining existing practices in Jefferson and best practices in other communities.</p> <p>As of June 2012, the Committee and the GCR report had completed their review and had finalized their recommendations. These will be presented to the administration in July, 2012.</p>	Action item complete. Present findings to Parish administration, and monitor implementation of action items on an on-going basis.			

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GNO Inc. Action Items								
ED5	Build upon existing efforts of GNO Inc. and commission a comprehensive study and action plan for the workforce development infrastructure in the New Orleans region	Initiate this phase of workforce development study before year end, 2010	<p>GNO, Inc. continues to focus on workforce development efforts in a variety of ways. One is GNO Inc.'s on-going administration of the local job search site, worknola.com. The purpose of the site is to provide a simple but comprehensive and no-cost employment resource for the Greater New Orleans area. Simultaneously, the site serves as a marketing tool for the region. In 2011, the average monthly job postings totaled 106. In the first four months of 2012, that average total increased by 58% to 167 per month.</p> <p>Another major workforce initiative that GNO Inc. has undertaken is what they are calling their "Human Capital Strategy"—an approach that focuses on the workforce needs of businesses by addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Talent gaps in focus sectors •The need for job retraining •The potential lack of middle managers •Talent/job connection challenges •Recruiting challenges. <p>Two steps have been taken over the past year to further this Human Capital Strategy. One is GNO Inc.'s hiring of Ginger Powers as an educational liaison. Her role is to engage the institutions of higher education in the region in economic development and workforce issues. The second is GNO Inc.'s inviting the presidents of a number of two and four year institutions of higher education to serve as Ex-officio members of the GNO Inc. Board of Directors.</p>	<p>Continue to monitor the effectiveness of worknola.com. Establish benchmarks and numerical goals for the desired number of monthly job postings.</p> <p>Continue to implement the Human Capital Strategy. Establish intermediate internal goals in the implementation of the Strategy, e.g. goals for the establishment of certain academic programs, measurable goals for addressing existing workforce deficiencies. Developing quantitative benchmarks will be critical to the success of this initiative.</p>				

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ED10	Oppose changes in the federal tax code that would discourage off-shore oil and gas exploration	Initiate outreach in 2009; continually monitor federal tax policy to preserve existing tax breaks for oil and gas exploration	<p>In response to the slowdown in offshore activity following the 2010 BP oil spill, GNO Inc. has pushed for a number of measures to increase energy exploration and production activity. Two proposals were the "Putting the Gulf by to Work Act" and the "Domestic Jobs, Domestic Energy, and Deficit Reduction Act" in Congress. Both of the measures passed the House of Representatives but stalled in the U.S. Senate.</p> <p>GNO Inc. also continues to publish the Gulf Permitting Index (GPI), a recurring assessment of permit and drilling activity relative to pre-spill levels. This initiative keeps the offshore industry in the public consciousness and applies pressure to policy makers to restore the industry to its previous health.</p> <p>GNO, Inc. has also continued to work with the state government and Mineral Board to reduce royalty rates for offshore activity. The 2010 oil spill delayed these efforts, but in May of 2011, the La Dept. of Natural Resources released a draft proposal for a new royalty policy. This draft is still under review, with potential action by the State Mineral Board later in 2012. GNO Inc. is working with the State government to advance this proposal.</p>	Monitor the progress of pending Congressional measures to increase drilling activity. Continue to advocate for reduced royalty rates at the state level to spur production activity. Continue to monitor proposals to change the federal tax code that would result in reduced drilling activity.					

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ED13	Identify major national growth industries and the potential for locally based companies to capitalize on emerging economic opportunities	Analyze LED study and coordinate with GNO Inc. in 2010; initiate analysis of and outreach to relevant local and national businesses in 2010, 2011	<p>According to JEDCO, the State and GNO Inc. have backed away from certain conclusions from the “blue ocean” study that was completed by LED several years ago to identify promising industries for growth. Certain industries, though, such as the sustainable industry subsector, have remained a point of emphasis in recruitment and retention efforts.</p> <p>In the case of Jefferson Parish, JEDCO focused their retention efforts on companies that had the potential to fall into these blue ocean categories with little success. JEDCO is now focusing much of its marketing efforts on national site selectors.</p> <p>The natural gas boom elsewhere in Louisiana has led to increased attention from industries looking to capitalize on the abundance of natural gas and accompanying low prices.</p>	Determine whether an industry-specific approach to recruitment and retention still makes sense for JEDCO or whether JEDCO would be better served by focusing primarily on site selectors and on recruitment/ retention generally.			
ED14	Partner with the Port of New Orleans, GNO Inc., and the Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce (BRAC) to expand opportunities for international shipping and trade	Analyze international trade study upon completion in 2009; coordinate with and offer technical assistance to GNO, Inc. and other agencies in the implementation of the study's recommendations	Over the past year, there has not been major progress on this initiative beyond what was reported in the last status report from July of 2011. Infrastructure tax credits for investments in port facilities were extended through 2017, thanks to legislation sponsored by Senator Appel in the 2011 legislative session. Also, periodic trade junkets to other countries (such as Brazil) have taken place over the past year.	<p>Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the infrastructure tax credit program in securing capital investments in port facilities.</p> <p>Determine whether additional legislative, administrative, marketing, and/or capital initiatives are necessary to increase international trade opportunities.</p>			

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Regional Planning Commission (RPC) Action Items							
ED6	Support the development of a passenger rail line from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, with a stop in Jefferson Parish	Secure funding for study in 2010, 2011; Initiate study in 2011, 2012; initiate capital program in 2014	<p>The CONNECT coalition, a project of the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX), continues to build support within the New Orleans-Baton Rouge "super region" for a passenger rail connection between the two core cities. CONNECT recently sponsored their second annual policy forum, an event that brought together transportation officials from the state and the two regions.</p> <p>CONNECT is also continuing to work on formally constituting a "rail compact," i.e. the agency that would be responsible for planning and overseeing the completion of this passenger rail connection. The Jefferson Parish government has been in talks with CONNECT about this issue and should be formally joining the rail compact in the near future.</p>	Encourage the Parish to complete the process of formally joining the Baton Rouge to New Orleans rail compact. Work with CONNECT and the compact in the planning of routes and stops to ensure that a) Jefferson benefits from the presence of one or multiple stops and that b) the location of other stops along the route does not encourage sprawling new development (thereby threatening Jefferson Parish).			

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ED7	Support the implementation of transportation projects of regional significance, such as a light rail line to the Airport; improvement to the Earhart Expressway, and the construction of I-49	Timelines vary by transportation project; aim to have studies underway for all key transportation projects by 2011	<p>There has been some incremental progress over the past year on transportation projects of regional significance. Given the extremely high cost of the I-49 extension project, DOTD is re-evaluating and re-scoping projects along the corridor, choosing to take on implementable pieces based on available funding.</p> <p>For the Earhart flyover, there may be enough funding to design at least one phase of the project. This project would be managed by DOTD.</p> <p>The Earhart/Causeway interchange has stalled due to the absence of a funding source. However, the RPC is examining ways to design the project in advance of any external funding becoming available.</p> <p>Relative to the proposed light rail between the Airport and Downtown New Orleans, there has been no momentum.</p>	Continue to attempt to identify funding sources for these projects, particularly those that are most tangible and most feasible in the near term—namely the Earhart flyover and the Causeway/Earhart interchange. Given President Young's interest in rail and streetcars, initiate a dialogue once again about a light rail connection between Downtown and the Airport. This discussion could piggyback on larger discussions and studies about the redevelopment of Louis Armstrong Airport.					
ED8	Collaborate with major railroads and the Regional Planning Commission to implement the New Orleans Rail Corridor Gateway Study	Secure funding for environmental assessment in 2010; initiate assessment in 2010, 2011; initiate capital improvements in 2013, 2014	The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Rail Corridor Gateway study is well underway. Project scoping meetings were held in February, 2012; a draft EIS and public hearings are expected in spring of 2013; and the final EIS is anticipated in spring of 2014. A record of decision (ROD) is expected in the summer of 2014. Michael Baker Co. is the lead consultant, and the project is on schedule.	Monitor and participate in Environmental Impact Statement study. Work to identify potential sources for implementation of the project.					

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Jefferson Parish Planning Dept. Action Items							
ED1	Modify land use regulations and invest in infrastructure to develop an "Elmwood West" commercial and industrial node	Issue RFP or initiate study in 2010; initiate regulatory changes/improvements in 2011, 2012	<p>Following up on the preliminary planning work completed by the University of Washington, Jefferson Parish recently retained UNO and Digital Engineering to complete a strategic plan for a portion of the West Bank of Jefferson. The area that the plan will examine, known as "Fairfield," extends south of U.S. 90 and is enclosed by the hurricane protection levee. The contract is currently being finalized.</p> <p>The focus of the plan will be future land use and infrastructure. The plan will be driven by stakeholder input. The final schedule of the planning process has not been set, but the plan should be completed in 2013.</p>	Monitor the progress of the Fairfield strategic plan. Assume an active role in the planning process to ensure that the plan is sufficiently ambitious and sufficiently detailed in its recommendations.			
Jefferson Parish Film Dept. Action Items							
ED12	Collaborate with Jefferson's state legislative delegation to renew the state motion picture, digital media, music production, live theater, and motion picture infrastructure tax credits.	Pass legislation in 2009, 2010 at the latest	Action complete. For more information, refer to October, 2009 status update.	No further action required.			

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City of Kenner Action Items								
ED2	Collaborate with the Airport to create a master plan for the redevelopment of "buyout" properties	Complete and issue RFP in 2009. Complete redevelopment plan in 2010	<p>There are several pending developments in the disposition of the buy-out properties. First, it has again been determined that a cooperative endeavor agreement (CEA) should be pursued between the City of Kenner, the Airport, and the City of New Orleans. A draft CEA is currently under review by all parties.</p> <p>Second, disposition of the properties is also being postponed until a study is completed by UNO concerning the properties. The study will recommend the optimal land uses for various properties, any changes that should be made to the zoning of the properties, whether rights of way would need to be rescinded, and whether properties should be bundled to developers vs. being sold off individually.</p>	Push to expedite the execution of the CEA. Monitor the progress of the UNO study, and push for an expeditious completion of the study.				



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