

SLEC BUSINESS BAROMETER

2016, QUARTER 2

South Louisiana Economic Council
Assumption • Lafourche • St. Mary • Terrebonne

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

As we move into the second half of 2016, our concerns continue to remain with the state of our economy. Projections indicate that we are continuing to grow after a low in the earlier part of this year. SLEC continues to be committed to our region and offer the resources and planning needed for our current economic challenges, as well as to prepare and position our businesses to compete again in a recovering economy.

Moving forward, companies will be faced with adapting their services to fill emerging markets within our region. None is more evident than that of coastal restoration. I was given the opportunity to present at *Working for Our Coast* sponsored by Restore or Retreat in May to inform businesses of assistance programs and give direction for moving forward into this growing market sector.

In early June, the South Louisiana Economic Council, with Louisiana Economic Development, Fletcher Technical Community College, economic development agencies in Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, and Assumption Parishes, and other strategic partners, hosted the Industrial Trades Job Fair. The event hosted 30 companies along with 826 attendees. Companies in attendance reported to having interviewed 402 candidates and hiring 45 candidates.

We have partnered with local stakeholders and started formulation of SLEC's strategic plan for 2017-2020. A community and business survey was distributed, stakeholders met, and now a final draft is nearing completion for an estimated delivery in early portion of the third quarter. This new plan will outline the strategic goals of SLEC that will address both the sustainability and future growth of our industries.

The Manning Passing Academy was held in late June several weeks after the release of the 2015 MPA Economic Impact Study. The findings of the study indicated that the Manning Passing Academy had a \$4.45M impact in direct tourism, entertainment, and field maintenance spending in the Bayou Region.

Moving forward, our organization is working to strengthen our regional partnership with Nicholls State University and South Central Planning Development District. SLEC will also be participating with the Super Region Committee of the Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce and Great New Orleans, Inc. in a canvassing tour of the Panama Canal region of Mexico, and will be assisting with launching a Business Resource Conference in late September.

Our organization remains committed to the region and will continue to work through this economic downturn to ensure our businesses can both develop and grow.

Respectfully,



Vic Lafont
President, CEO
SLEC

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE BAYOU REGION?

Region adds 1,661 jobs since January, begins slow, steady climb out of economic bottom.

Economic indicators point to the 4th quarter of 2015 as the bottom of the bust in the Bayou Region. During the last quarter of 2015, most industry sectors were down 5% to 20% from a year earlier. Then in May 2016, all of a sudden, the Bayou Region led the state and nation in percent change in job growth compared to May 2015. See charts.

Regional employment in May was up 504 jobs from April, and so was the unemployment rate as more workers began returning to the work force in hopes of find employment. Parish year over year employment changes from May 2015 to May 2016; month over month April to May were: Assumption Parish down 76 jobs at 9,048 and up 192 since January; Lafourche down 2,003 at 42,797 and up 807 since January; St. Mary down 807 from one year ago at 22,007, and down 229 since the beginning of the year, and; Terrebonne down 2,146 at 48,255 from one year ago and up 891 since the beginning of the year.

Changes in employment from April to May were modest with the Goods Producing Sectors remaining unchanged and the Service Providing Sectors rising 0.4%. The biggest job gains were in leisure and hospitality and government.

THE FAST FACTS OF QUARTER 2

- 1** May Regional Employment was 122,107; up 504 from last month.
- 2** The Houma-Thibodaux MSA unemployment rate in February was 6.6%; up .8 points from one year ago.
- 3** Louisiana's unemployment rate in May was 6.1%; the nation's rate was 4.5%.
- 4** Louisiana's Rotary Rig count, land and offshore on July 15th was 46; down 23 from a year ago.
- 5** Twenty-seven buildings and 42 sites are listed for sale or lease on the Bayou Region database:
<http://www.louisianasiteselection.com/bayouregion/Buildings-and-Sites.aspx>

SLEC, parish, and state economic developers are currently working on 9 Projects-in-the-Pipeline that have the potential to create 860 new jobs, \$44 million in annual new payroll, and \$1.5 billion in new investment.

In June, SLEC assisted Nicholls State University and the Manning Passing Academy hold its 20th camp in Thibodaux. 1,250 participants and 38 of the nation's top collegiate quarterbacks and 120 coaches attended the 4 day event. SLEC calculated that the 2015 camp had an economic impact of \$4.5 million throughout the region.

VISUALIZING THE INFORMATION OF QUARTER 2

