2004 CEDS ANNUAL REPORT

SOUTH CENTRAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2004 ANNUAL REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Every year the South Central Planning and Development Commission's Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan is reviewed and updated as part of the CEDS continued eligibility process. This is a regional strategy that identifies an action plan to meet the goals and objectives spelled out in the CEDS that are necessary to achieve a sustainable economy in the region. The CEDS is prepared every five years and in the interim Annual Reports note the progress and setbacks in implementing the Action Plan. Changes in local conditions that affect the implementation of the CEDS are noted and if necessary the strategy is modified to adapt to the changes. This is the second Annual Report to the five year CEDS strategy adopted in June 2002.

The CEDS is a mechanism for coordinating the efforts of those concerned with economic development. The CEDS comprises four main elements:

- ***Analysis.*** The strategy *analyzes* the regional economy and looks at external trends and forces. It identifies partners and resources for economic development.
- ***Vision.*** The *vision* is a statement of the region's goals; "Where do we want to be?"
- ***Action Plan.*** An *action plan* is developed as a way to attain the goals.
- ***Evaluation.*** Finally, an ongoing *evaluation* of the CEDS is made to determine what improvements or changes should be made in the strategy.

Following are the goals identified for the South Central Planning and Development District.

- **Goal One**: Improve the public infrastructure of the region in order to support and sustain a viable economy and environment.
- **Goal Two**: Create and retain quality jobs and foster a more diversified economy.
- **Goal Three**: To improve the overall capacity of the Region to make efficient land use decisions.
- **Goal Four**: To improve the overall capacity of the Region to make economic development decisions.
- **Goal Five**: To improve the fiscal capacity of local government and to make the Region financially attractive for economic development.
- **Goal Six**: To protect and conserve the natural resources of the Region and to promote more equitable use of these resources for business and recreation.

The SCPDC Board of Directors acts as the regional CEDS Committee. The staff of SCPDC remains in touch with local economic development committees and staff throughout the year through periodic attendance at local meetings and through a working committee of the region's economic development specialists. In this way SCPDC can provide support for local efforts and help move forward regional goals. Current membership lists for each of these committees are included in the Appendices.

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

LEGAL STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION

SCPDC is one of eight (8) sub-state regional planning and economic development districts within the State of Louisiana. The district was created in 1972 when each member parish and municipality adopted ordinances to create and participate in the SCPDC. At that time the Commission was established as an Economic Development District (EDD) with assistance from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). In 1977 the State of Louisiana formalized the eight sub-state planning districts with the passage of Act 472. SCPDC was established under the act as Planning District 3. Additionally, SCPDC is incorporated as a non-profit organization as provided in Louisiana Revised Statutes 12:201 et. seq., as amended, provided however, that such activities shall be consistent with those necessary to accomplish the purpose of a regional planning or economic development district and are for charitable, educational and scientific research purposes. The Commission currently operates under Articles of Incorporation, Commission By-Laws, Administrative and Personnel Policies.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

The CEDS process in the South Central District is coordinated at a Regional level and operates at the parish level. Each of the six (6) member parishes have opted to maintain their development status and eligibility for EDA assistance by participating in a coordinated CEDS process conducted by South Central Planning. Each member parish maintains an independent CEDS committee and formulates their own economic development concepts. The South Central Planning Region has a collective Regional CEDS Committee made up of representatives from each of the Regional Parishes. Once the individual parish CEDS committee has formulated individual economic development goals, they then submit this information to the Regional CEDS Committee for incorporation into the Regional Economic Development Plan and then into the CEDS document. This information is also used in the yearly CEDS Update Report.

To monitor progress and update strategies, each year South Central Planning conducts an annual review with each individual parish economic development department and their CEDS committee. The annual review process includes the review of last's year's goals, identification of accomplishments, updating the goals, discussion of constraints, and potentials for development within the parish and the region, and updating of the parish and regional implementation strategy and annual work programs. SCPDC's implementation strategy and annual work program is established by the Regional CEDS Committee. The SCPDC Board of Commissioners sits as the Regional CEDS Committee.

SCPDC compiles the aforementioned information and prepares annual updates or reports. A report is submitted to each parish committee review and comments and the final draft is submitted to the SCPDC Board of Commissioners. Upon review and approval by the Board of Commissioners, the report is submitted to EDA.

LOCAL CONTACT

For more information on the CEDS process or specific economic development programs contact:

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AREAS INCLUDED IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The area included in the CEDS process is co-terminus with the geographic jurisdiction of the South Central Planning and Development Commission which Assumption, Lafourche, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, and Terrebonne Parishes along with the municipalities of Golden Meadow, Gramercy, Lockport, Lutcher, Napoleonville, and Thibodaux. The City of Houma was consolidated with Terrebonne Parish in 1983 to form one government called the Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government. Appendix A contains the SCPDC's Board of Commissioners.

BOARD MEMBERS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Appendix A contains a list of the Parish CEDS Committee members and Appendix C provides minutes from recent meetings of the SCPDC Board.

LETTERS OF CONCURRENCE

Appendix B contains letters of record from each parish acknowledging their concurrence with the economic development planning process.

LOCAL ECONOMY UPDATE

The South Central Region continues to experience steady population growth. St. Charles Parish was the 5th fastest growing Parish in the State between 1990 and 2000 with a 13.3% increase in population. St. Charles and St. John the Baptist Parish are expected to be areas of continued large population growth in the coming years.

While population has not grown as fast in the Houma Metropolitan area, it continues to have the fastest growing job market in the State. Total nonfarm employment in the Houma MSA was estimated at 83, 200 for February 2004. The over the year loss of 600 jobs was found mainly in the service-providing supersector. Unemployment rates between February 2004 and 2003 remained pretty constant in each Parish as follows:

	FEBRUARY 2004	FEBRUARY 2003
Assumption	7.9	9.1
Lafourche	3.7	3.7
St. Charles	5.3	5.9
St. James	9.9	9.9
St. John the Baptist	7.4	7.7
Terrebonne	4.1	4.2

The Louisiana Department of Labor has published projected employment by industry for the years 1998 through 2008 by Regional Labor Market Areas. Three of the South Central Planning and Development District parishes (Assumption, Lafourche and Terrebonne) comprise RLMA 3 while the other three (St. Charles, St. James and St. John the Baptist) have been moved into the larger eight parish RLMA 1 which also includes Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, St. Tammany and Plaquemines parishes. RLMA 3 is projected to have growth in every major industry area save one. The largest growth is anticipated in the construction sector with a projected increase of 34.34%, in particular in the Heavy Construction category. Nondurable Goods categories are expected to experience declines in jobs in particular in Food and Kindred Products. This may be due to changes in technology and other changes as this small region moves away from an agrarian to a more industrial landscape. Growth in RLMA 1 is not as great and the category with the most new jobs is expected to be Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing with a 28.25% rate of growth. Losses are anticipated in the Mining sector, no doubt due to many oil and gas exploration companies reorganizing their staffs and shifting operations from New Orleans to other cities.

The Region's average weekly incomes in 2002 were in the top third of the State according to Department of Labor reports. In 2002, St. Charles Parish had the highest average weekly income in the State at $823.38. St. James Parish ranked 5th in the State with $708.90 per week. Terrebonne and Lafourche had lower average weekly incomes with $595.92 for Terrebonne and $584.67 for Lafourche. While these incomes are much better than much of the rest of the State,

it is still below national and regional averages. Highest paid occupations in the Houma and the New Orleans MSAs are medical fields. In New Orleans professional athletes and sports competitors rank high, too. Other high earning fields are engineering fields, legal and managerial.

The report, the "Louisiana Economic Outlook 2004 - 2005" by Loren Scott, et al, forecast 3,700 new jobs for the Houma MSA over 2004-05. This average growth rate of 2.2% annually is currently the fastest among Louisiana's MSAs. The primary component of growth is the oil and gas extraction industry. Diversification in the area's shipbuilding sector was also noted as a reason for continued growth.

The three River Parishes of the South Central District are included in the New Orleans MSA in the Scott report. As a result of the 2000 Census, St. James Parish has been moved into the Baton Rouge MSA and the Department of Labor will show this change after 2005. This MSA lost 13,000 jobs over 2001-2003. Reasons identified included shut down or reduced projection at area ammonia fertilizer plants due to high natural gas costs, including Monsanto and OxyChem, steel tariffs and gas prices affecting Bayou Steel, and Dow Chemical layoffs due to company mergers. A major concern will be downsizing in chemical and industrial construction sectors many of which are located in St. Charles Parish.

The report also noted that New Orleans is the richest MSA in terms of per capita income while Houma is the poorest. Houma is not far behind Lake Charles and Lafayette in terms of per capita income.

In light of the information presented, it seems apparent that the goal of attracting quality jobs to the Region is still a major concern.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Following is an overview of accomplishments during the past year in meeting the goals and objectives of the CEDS.

GOAL ONE: Improve the public infrastructure of the region in order to support and sustain a viable economy and environment.

Movement of goods and people within the region remains a top concern. Improved transportation will help to move people to and from job centers and essential services. Considering the importance of the areas maritime ports and airports, transportation infrastructure is of enormous concern.

The State's Louisiana Airport Authority (LAA) made a recommendation to locate a major cargo airport on the Westbank of the Mississippi River in Ascension Parish near Donaldsonville. Part of the site would be located in Assumption Parish. An Economic Impact Report was prepared for the LAA Plans using a cargo only and a cargo/passenger terminal scenario. A summary of the report's findings in the *LTC Landing Newsletter* states that the cumulative impact of the LTC over a 40 year construction period in terms of number of jobs would be 66,018 for the cargo only scenario and 70,879 for the cargo/passenger facility 70,879. Much of the impact would be felt within Ascension, Assumption, St. James and Iberville Parishes. Other impacts follow:

	Cargo Only	Cargo/Passenger
New Household Earnings for Louisiana citizens	$40.1 billion	$$45.5 bill
New Sales for Louisiana businesses	$174.8 billion	$194.9 billion
New State taxes collected	over $2.2 billion	over $2.5 bill

The Region continues to support efforts to bring Highway 90 up to interstate standards between Lafayette and I-310 in Lafourche and St. Charles Parishes and thus continue Interstate 49. Houma is the last Louisiana urbanized area without a direct interstate link. Interstate 49, when complete, will provide Louisiana with its only north/south interstate corridor. The State presented to the public alternative alignments through St. Charles and Lafourche Parishes and continues to study these alternatives.

The Houma MPO continues to make transportation improvements in the region and is undertaking planning for an intelligent transportation system. Due to the current and projected growth patterns, the MPO chooses to be proactive in making use of every available technology and program that will help improve transportation systems and services.

The Houma Airport continued its long range planning and implementation in order to accommodate the growing pressure for a full service general aviation airport in the region. The Greater Lafourche Port Commission took over the operation of an underutilized South Lafourche

Airport in Galliano with plans to provide service and access for its many port operations that rely on air transport.

The region continued to look for ways to improve sewage treatment. This is a major public infrastructure issue, along with drainage and flood protection, due to the South Central Region's geography, high water table and soils. Growth in some areas has taken place at rates faster than the Parish's ability to keep up with the provision of municipal sewerage. In the coming years this will no doubt become a problem if not addressed now. Many communities, including St. James, St. Charles and Terrebonne, are actively looking for ways to pull together various funding sources in order to accomplish this goal. SCPDC has received a grant to conduct a comprehensive regional sewerage assessment. This will allow the region to look at what is available and what if any opportunities exist for regional collaboration in addressing sewerage issues.

As water systems age, communities have attempted to upgrade the facilities to keep up with the demand for water usage with growth and new businesses. Assumption Parish received assistance through the EDA and the Louisiana Economic Development Assistance Program that will allow it to increase water capacity in order to maintain two sugar mills in the Parish thereby saving 170 jobs. It is anticipated that with other business and industrial growth many of the older communities will need to increase the water capacity they can offer.

Flood protection is critical to the region. Terrebonne Parish adopted a millage that will help pay for a hurricane protection levee that will tie into that in existence in St. Mary and Lafourche Parishes. Local drainage systems are constantly maintained and improved in order to handle the increased runoff resulting from denser growth.

The Environmental Impact Statement for the construction of a north-to-south access road for the Veterans Memorial Mississippi River Bridge between Gramercy and Thibodaux is ongoing and the outcome is anxiously awaited.

Louisiana Highway 1 project planning has made progress. An Environmental Impact Statement is underway for a critical stretch of highway between Port Fourchon and Golden Meadow. This portion of the highway is a vital commercial, recreational, and hurricane evacuation link and is extremely vulnerable to destruction as a result of erosion, land loss, and voluminous traffic. Replacement of the Leeville Bridge with an overpass has been identified as a critical priority for improvements to LA Highway 1. The bridge was hit 11 times by boats in the past year and suffers from erosion related problems.

As are all of Louisiana's maritime ports, the ports in the South Central Region are directing efforts toward meeting the import/export demand of the fast growing economies of Central and South America. The region's three ports made progress in their ongoing infrastructure improvements. The Port's location directly on the Gulf of Mexico and in the center of the Gulf of Mexico has made it the prime staging area for offshore facilities and services related to petroleum exploration.

The Port of South Louisiana continues to develop its Globalplex Intermodal Terminal. This Port is the third largest tonnage port in the world. In the coming year the Port plans to improve rail spurs that provide service into the Port site. The Port received a grant from the EDA which will help pay for the rail spur work.

The Terrebonne Port Commission completed improvements to its site at the intersection of the Houma Navigation Canal and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW). Annually some 69 million tons of goods pass through Houma on the GIWW. By offering improved port facilities Terrebonne is hoping to capitalize on its location along the GIWW and become a key support and service center along this inland water route.

These Ports are monitoring and participating in the development of the State's Millennium Port Plan. The State is evaluating sites that can be developed as a State Port to handle the larger ships that are dominating the overseas shipping industry. Regardless of the site chosen, the general opinion is that all of the ports in the State will need to coordinate their efforts and offer the full range of services that the Plan will call for in order to keep Louisiana at the forefront of port activity in the United States and the world.

PAST YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Started construction of water improvements for Assumption Parish.
- Completed a Slip A of the Port Fourchon northern expansion.
- Adopted Master Plan and begin its implementation for the South Lafourche Leonard Miller Jr. Airport.
- Lafourche Parish School Board continued its facility assessment and prepared student enrollment projections to help plan for building improvements.
- Completed new Pierre Part Library in Assumption Parish.
- Complete new Vacherie Library in St. James Parish
- Completed construction of community sewage system for Rita in Lafourche Parish.
- Started construction of rail spur funded by EDA and State EDAP funds for the Port of South Louisiana.
- Started construction of 72,000 sq. ft. transit shed for the Port of South Louisiana using State Capital Outlay and Port money.
- Constructed a bike path and walking trail in Thibodaux.
- Completed construction of Lutcher Senior Center
- Completed construction of Vacherie Canal Backwater Prevention Project.
- Completed E.I.S. for La. Hwy. 1 improvements from Port Fourchon to U. S. Hwy. 90.
- Completed construction of Agriculture Center in Assumption Parish.
- Completed Rienzi Canal drainage improvements.
- Completed a fire training facility for Terrebonne Parish fire districts 5, 6 and 7.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE COMING YEAR.

- Continue to implement the South Lafourche Leonard Miller Jr. Airport Master Plan.
- Continue to improve facilities at the Houma Airport.
- Continue to implement Port Fourchon and Port of Terrebonne Master Plans.

- Continue program of street and road improvements throughout the region.
- Continue efforts to improve Lafourche Parish Library System and explore alternatives for the location and construction of a new main library facility and various branches.
- Increase the capacity of the St. Charles Parish East Bank Water system
- Assist St Charles Parish in developing a drainage canal bank stabilization plan.
- Continued construction of a community sewerage system for Morristown neighborhood in Lafourche Parish.
- Continue to work on plans to develop a regional cargo air terminal through the Louisiana Airport Authority.
- Continue annexation plans and infrastructure improvements for the City of Thibodaux.
- Complete sewerage infrastructure improvements and dredging of channel at the Port of Terrebonne facility.
- Start EIS and Feasibility Studies for North-South Corridor connecting the Gramercy Wallace Bridge to the Thibodaux area.
- Movement of a utility servitude at the Port of South Louisiana in order to allow for internal roadway from dock to industrial properties.
- Continue to explore best methods for closure of treatment ponds at the Port of South Louisiana.
- Begin construction of a marine lift system to transfer cargo over the Mississippi River levee on the West Bank of St. Charles Parish.
- Implement sewerage improvements for Georgette and Grant Loop communities in Assumption pending receipt of LCDBG funds.
- Complete sewage upgrade for Napoleonville.
- Construct conveyor from docks to service lay-down areas at Globalplex.
- Explore the possibility of constructing a new four lane truck route connecting La. Hwy. 3235 to the South Lafourche Airport.
- Continue Northern Expansion project for Port Fourchon.
- Start Thibodaux East-West Corridor Project.
- Continue construction of levee from Coteau Canal Boat Launch to Forrestal Street in St James Parish.
- Complete construction of new raw water intact system for St. James Parish water system.
- Continue drainage improvements throughout the Region.
- Continue efforts to ensure the planned Houma Navigation Canal and lock system are designed for medium draft vessels at 200 feet wide and 20 feet deep.
- Deepen the existing east-west channel connecting the Houma Navigation Canal to Bayou LaFourche to 12-feet to facilitate flow of traffic between the Ports of Terrebonne and Fourchon.
- Continue efforts to gain support and funding for I-49.
- Continue efforts to gain support and funding for improvements to LA. Hwy. 1.
- Continue parish wide sewage efforts in St. James, St. John the Baptist, St Charles and Terrebonne.
- Continue construction of Belle Rose and Bayou L'Ourse Assumption Branch libraries.
- Continue plans to expand and improve airport facilities in St John Parish.
- Continue preliminary design of LA 1 and LA 308 Couplet system in Thibodaux.
- Continue sidewalk improvements throughout St James Parish.

- Upgrade water system throughout Assumption Parish, in particular the lines serving industrial areas, Louisiana Highway 70, and on Belle River Road.
- Continue to provide road overlay and improvement programs in all parishes and municipalities.
- Continue to pursue general cargo opportunities to better serve the maritime industry.
- Convert Golden Meadow and Larose Floodgates into locks in order to facilitate waterborne commerce during high water stages.
- Continue to explore alternatives for creation of a public transit system for Thibodaux.
- Continue to develop plans for a regional transit service for the River Region.
- Construct Recreation District No. 2 complex in Assumption Parish.
- Develop, plan and design St Charles Civic Center/Fairgrounds.
- Explore feasibility of establishing rail/container-on-barge transfer service along Bayou Lafourche to Port Fourchon.
- Gas, sewage, and water system improvements in Thibodaux.
- Improve and upgrade Thibodaux Municipal Airport.
- Increase warehouse and distribution capacity at the Port of South Louisiana.
- Investigate adequacy of LA Highways 1 and 308 in Assumption Parish as alternate hurricane evacuation routes.
- Continue to design and engineer updates for the St James Parish-wide Sewage System facilities and being implementation.
- Construct water system improvements for the Town of Gramercy through an EPA grant.
- Continue efforts to find funding for St James Parish drainage canal improvements.
- Continue citywide drainage improvements in Thibodaux.
- Support efforts to reconstruct St Patrick Highway.
- Support Governor's LA 1 Task Force plans for hurricane evacuation route from Grand Isle to Alexandria.
- Continue to support the expansion of shipbuilding in the region and the infrastructure necessary to support it.
- Support initiatives to improve public facilities and access to Port Fourchon beaches.
- Upgrade fire protection facilities throughout the Region.
- Continue to work on plans for a new building for the Council of Aging in Assumption Parish.
- Repair sidewalks on the River Road in Edgard (La. Hwy. 18) and Reserve (La. Hwy. 44).
- Improve lighting on the St. Andrew Blvd. in LaPlace.
- Construct sidewalks on Tunnel Blvd. in Houma.
- Complete East Bank Bike Path in St. Charles Parish.
- Complete design and fund West Bank bicycle path and the remainder of the East Bank path in St. Charles Parish.
- Begin construction of a deepwater dock and related facilities on the West Bank of St. Charles Parish.
- Continue constructing, designing and funding of East bank and West Bank Hurricane Protection Levees in St. Charles Parish.
- Continue to identify and redevelop brownfield sites in parishes throughout the region.

Goal Two: Create and retain quality jobs and foster a more diversified economy.

High-quality jobs that earn a higher pay require better education and training. Higher quality, higher paying jobs, and higher quality education and training bring with them a higher quality life style. All of these are major goals of the CEDS for the South Central Region.

Nicholls State University continues to expand its program and offers internship/externship courses in many of the degree programs. These kinds of programs are valuable in developing work experience and work habits for the students and can be, and are, of extreme value to any business that participates. The University offers courses of instruction that train the student entering the marketplace. In addition to many the four year program degrees, the University offers two year associate degrees in allied health fields, culinary arts, general business, paralegal and criminal justice fields. NSU offers a specialty program geared toward the normal work schedule within that petroleum industry on a special "seven days on/seven days" off schedule. Two Associate Degrees, petroleum services and petroleum safety, are conferred along with a Bachelor of Science Degree in petroleum services.

The Louisiana Community and Technical College System is a statewide program with campuses scattered at central locations throughout the State. These training facilities offer associate degrees and certificates in a variety of fields including office systems, practical nursing and allied health fields, industrial, petroleum, construction and related trades. There are three campuses in the South Central Region. The Louisiana Technical College offers two sites, the River Parishes Campus in St. John the Baptist Parish and the Lafourche Campus in Thibodaux. The L. E. Fletcher Technical Community College in Houma provides similar programs. These training facilities are growing to meet the demand for programs that are not offered at traditional four year universities. The LCTCS remains flexible in the programs it offers in order to supply the local demand for skilled for labor in each region. The LCTCS will often build programs around industry needs.

St. James Parish implemented a pilot computer training program with in cooperation with the Parish Council on Aging through a grant from the Louisiana Community Development Block Grant Program. The Parish set up a temporary training center at its Council on Aging center and trained 32 people in basic computer skills. The Parish is purchasing a mobile training lab. The lab will arrive in the summer and will be initially used for a student summer program. In the fall the lab will be used to train senior citizens and single parents in basic computer technology. This will help ready those who are new or reentering the job market gain skills that will improve their job opportunities.

The SCPDC now has seven small business loans and one pending application through its EDA Revolving Loan Fund Program. The most recent loan was processed July 2003.

SCPDC continues to look for programs that offer training for public officials and business. Each year two regional workshops on Economic Incentives are offered. Information presented provides business and industry with assistance in taking advantage of the States business

incentive programs, such as the Enterprise Zone program. During the first part of 2004, four train the trainer programs were presented through a grant from the National Traffic Highway Safety Administration on the impact of drinking on driving and how it affects costs and employees in the workplace. Through other grants, the SCPDC was able to offer a traffic engineering workshop geared toward local governments. The SCPDC continues to offer local government workshops on topics including budget, open meeting, fair housing, and ethics laws and environmental justice and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The South Central Region strives to diversify its economy in order to become less reliant on an industry driven by factors beyond its control, the energy industry. In order to do this the Region must continue to improve the education and skills of its labor force, improve transportation, and step up efforts to attract the kinds of industry that offer quality jobs.

PAST YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Held a traffic engineering workshop for area decision makers.
- Conducted the annual Traffic Summit.
- Continued planning efforts for construction of the Assumption Parish Vocational School.
- Continued Incumbent Workers Training Program.
- Continued cooperative partnerships with other economic development agencies.
- Continued economic development planning and technical assistance.
- Completed pedestrian bridge across Bayou Lafourche in Thibodaux connecting bike path and new Chamber of Commerce building.
- Supported continued efforts of the Workforce Investment Board to improve skills and job access of the workforce.
- Terrebonne Parish continued to work with a local CHADDO to develop a business incubator in Houma.
- Operation of a Farmers Market for local and area producers in St. Charles Parish.
- Continued with Enterprise Zone Assistance.
- Graduated two classes from the pilot program of St. James Van-Go Program.
- Began construction of a recreational vehicle campground on Spur 70 in Assumption Parish.
- Continued to operate Farmer's Markets in Thibodaux and Destrehan.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE COMING YEAR.

- Continue to support efforts of the Region's Ports to attract new business and industry.
- Develop distribution, manufacturing, technology and tourism clusters for St. Charles Parish.
- Implement the St. James Parish Van-Gogh program.
- Develop a commercial retail center, The Cypress Center, off La. Hwy. 3125 in Lutcher.
- Expand the current racetrack in Assumption Parish to include bike motor-cross and campground.
- Expand the Revolving Loan Fund operated by SCPDC.
- Work to bring a NASCAR sanctioned and supported racing and research facility to the three River Parishes.
- Continue regional economic diversification and new business recruitment efforts.

- Continue efforts to create a technology based business incubator center in Thibodaux.
- Develop warehousing, light industrial and high technology clusters in St Charles Parish.
- Expand tourism efforts throughout the South Central Region.
- Monitor and support efforts of the River Parish Tourism Commission.
- Promote the culture and heritage of the entire region.
- Develop a multiuse pavilion at the St. James Welcome Center.
- Develop a Farmer's Market in Napoleonville.

Goal Three: To improve the overall capacity of the Region to make efficient land use decisions.

Communities in the SCPDC region continued to update their comprehensive planning and local land use tools. Terrebonne Parish completed work on its Comprehensive Plan and submitted it to the local government which is currently considering it for adoption. Assumption Parish is working on updating its subdivision regulations. St. Charles Parish is updating its local land use regulations and considering what kind of historic building protection might best suit the community. Thibodaux is developing a Main Street Plan which will protect and revitalize its historic downtown area. The Houma Downtown Development District continues to review and approve plans for development within its historic boundaries. Both St. James and St. John are actively addressing issues in their land use regulations and working toward updating local codes. Finally the Lafourche Parish Planning Commission continues to consider options for updating its Comprehensive Plan. Many area School Boards have undertaken similar efforts in order to better plan for future facility needs as student enrollments grow.

PAST YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Continued traffic studies for more efficient transportation problem resolution.
- Supported efforts of local school boards to expand, upgrade, and construct new educational facilities.
- Thibodaux created a Main Street Program.
- Continued work on developing a regional geographic information system.
- Adopted Terrebonne Parish Comprehensive Plan.
- Completed and adopted Houma Thibodaux urbanized are Master Transportation Plan.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE COMING YEAR.

- Organize an educational workshop for area planning, zoning and adjustment boards and their staff concerning State laws and the planning process.
- Continue work on Master Transportation Plan for the River Region.
- Continue to interact with the RPC in order to coordinate highway planning along the St. Charles--Jefferson boundary.
- Review and update the Airline Hwy, Belle Terre and Hwy. 51 overlay district in order to promote aesthetic improvements in the commercial center of LaPlace.
- Continue to assist Parishes and municipalities in their land use planning efforts.
- Continue to support school districts in their planning efforts.
- Continue to improve to Lafourche Parish Tourism Center

- Continue to work on creation of a GIS system for Lafourche Parish
- Update the St Charles Parish land use plan.
- Continue ongoing investigation of creating a Reserve Historic District.
- Continue to operate the Main Street Program for Thibodaux and Houma
- Begin implementation of Terrebonne Comprehensive Plan.
- Creation of historic preservation plan for St. Charles Parish

Goal Four: To improve the overall capacity of the Region to make economic development decisions.

The SCPDC region has a range of economic development issues from an exceedingly high unemployment rate in St. James Parish to low per capita incomes in areas that do have high employment. St. Charles Parish has one of the highest per capita incomes in the State and Assumption has one of the lowest. The fact is each Parish needs to determine its assets and know how best to market itself. Each needs to determine what kind of industries will create the jobs its workforce can fill and what training must be provided to this. Then, as a group the Region can focus on how best to market its assets and work together to improve opportunities for the Region's workforce. Four of the Parishes, St. Charles, St. John, St. James and Terrebonne, have full time economic development staff that try to keep on top of development issues in order to put the community in the best light for potential new industry and business. The State's Workforce Investment Board is working toward creation of training programs in order to increase the area's skilled workforce. Several of the region's communities have updated their economic development plans including St. Charles and Terrebonne Parishes. Terrebonne is now in the midst of making a transition from a local government economic development department to a special district for economic development, the Terrebonne Economic Development Authority. This will give it greater flexibility in addressing economic issues. The municipal area of Houma also has a Downtown Development District which strives to retain and attract new business to the historic center of the town.

PAST YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Continued to provide Census and other economic data as needed.
- Assisted in community relations activities.
- Continued to work with towns and parishes to develop new websites and upgrade existing sites.
- Maintained Parish Economic Development Offices.
- Monitored changes in industry and affect on local economy.
- Completed and adopted the Terrebonne Parish Strategic Plan for Economic Development Plan and organizational plan for the Terrebonne Economic Development Authority.
- Creation of a grant and development department in Lafourche Parish.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE COMING YEAR.

- Continue to support and participate on the Workforce Investment Board.
- Conduct an economic development incentive workshop.
- Continue efforts of Lafourche Parish to establish a economic development department.

- Develop a Community Strategic Plan for Thibodaux.
- Continue Enterprise Zone Assistance.
- Continue to gather information to document and portray OCS impact on Lafourche Parish.
- Continue efforts of Lafourche Parish to develop parishwide connectivity and community access via an improved community website.
- Implement the scope of projects identified in the St. Charles Parish Strategic Plan.
- Create Terrebonne Economic Development Authority.
- Create an economic development plan for Assumption Parish using Team City model.
- The Atchafalaya Trace Heritage program plans to conduct a tax incentive workshop.

Goal Five: To improve the fiscal capacity of local government and to make the Region financially attractive for economic development.

The SCPDC continues to assist its member communities in exploring methods of financing public improvements. During the past this has included not only grant research but also exploring alternatives such as development or other fee increases and local tax efforts. The Parish and municipal governments work closely with their bonding attorneys on such matters. In these times of low interest rates on certificates of deposit and other usual savings methods and the general unwillingness of local residents and businesses to increase taxes, governments are trying to be more creative in the provision of public facilities and services. Cost cutting methods are employed and joint enterprises are undertaken. Regional cooperative efforts are helping communities by sharing limited resources and equipment. Several regional initiatives that have continued during the past year include the Bayou and River Region Mutual Aid Task Force, River Parishes Transit Authority, the River Parishes Tourism Commission, the Regional Crime Lab, the South Central Safe Community Partnership and South Central Solid Waste Commission.

PAST YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Ongoing implementation of Safe Community Program to improve highway safety through education of drivers.
- Continue to implement the Terrebonne and SCPDC Revolving Loan Funds.
- Continued to plan for a River Region Public Transit System.
- Continue to support the regional mutual aide assistance network.
- Assumption Parish began work on becoming a Team City.
- Developed a notification system for Homeland Security in Assumption Parish.
- Developed a Regional Response Team to respond to multiple-hazards including terrorism.
- Upgraded 911 to include mapping for locations of residents and cell phones in Assumption Parish.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE COMING YEAR.

- Continue efforts to create a Regional Criminalistic Laboratory.
- Continue efforts of Weed and Seed Programs in Lafourche and Terrebonne.

- Implementation of an ITS for Houma Urbanized Area.
- Continue Team City efforts for Assumption Parish.

Goal Six: To protect and conserve the natural resources of the Region and to promote more equitable use of these resources for business and recreation.

SCPDC continues to work with its member communities on issues such as nonpoint source pollution, preparing funding requests for recreational grants and enhancement grants. In addition it continues to be a member of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program Management Committee and actively participates in the program. BTNEP and the Atchafalaya Trace Heritage Foundation are actively involved in promoting the economic development of sustainable natural resources in the region. St. John the Baptist Parish is in the midst of developing its own Coastal Management Program which will help to give direction in the conservation of the natural resources of that Parish. SCPDC received an EPA Brownfields Assessment Pilot Grant and had begun creating an inventory of potential Brownfields sites. Through the grant three Phase I Assessments have been completed on abandoned properties and the SCPDC is working with the Port of South Louisiana to develop a Phase II Assessment of some of its property. Programs like this will help to bring to the forefront what can be done when abandoned properties with real or perceived contamination are cleaned up and put back in the market place thus conserving open land and making the best use of existing resources. Parishes in the region continue to seek ways to improve municipal sewerage systems and have taken over private community plants in order to ensure proper maintenance.

PAST YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Continued work on the St John the Baptist Parish Coastal Zone Management Plan Update.
- Conducted outreach and education on nonpoint source pollution.
- Began implementation of EPA Brownfields Pilot Project which will inventory potential brownfields sites for redevelopment and successfully redeveloped one Brownfield site in Napoleonville Louisiana
- Provide an outreach program on Environmental Justice.
- Completed Attakapas Landing boat launch improvements in Assumption Parish.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE COMING YEAR.

- Investigate feasibility of constructing a new agricultural/multi purpose center to be used for community activities geared toward agricultural education and potential farmers/seafood marked for Lafourche Parish and the region.
- Restore historic Edgard railroad station for use as a St. John Parish tourism center.
- Continue to support and participate in the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program.
- Development of a State recreational vehicle campground within or adjacent to the State Maurepas Wildlife Management area.

- Develop a Cooperate Incentives Resource Guide that will identify incentives that encourage use of development methods and equipment that are less damaging to the environment for BTNEP.
- Continue implementation of Atchafalya Recreation Plan for Assumption and Terrebonne Parishes.
- Promote the restoration and reuse of historic buildings on the St. John River Road for business and commercial development.
- Provide education and outreach on nonpoint source pollution and private sewage treatment facilities.
- Continue conducting Phase I and II Assessments for selected brownfield sites.
- Maintain FEMA Community Rating System Programs.
- Implement Barrier Island Restoration Projects.
- Implement the Coast 2050 Ecosystem Strategy.
- Support efforts to create a Comprehensive hurricane Protection Plan for Coastal Louisiana.
- Adopt a coastal permitting process for St. John the Baptist Parish.
- Continue to support national designation of the Atchafalaya Trace National Heritage Area.
- Completion of a recreational walking and birding trail in the Mandalay National Wildlife Refuge in Terrebonne Parish.
- Development of a children's Wetlands Discovery Center in Houma.
- Creation of a regional military museum.

APPENDICES

A. COMMITTEE MAKEUP
B. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

COMMITTEES

The makeup of the CEDS committees for the parishes and the regional working committee follow.

REGIONAL CEDS COMMITTEE

NAME/ADDRESS	AFFILIATION	RACE/SEX
Martin Triche P.O. Box 520 Napoleonville, LA 70390 (985) 369-6168	Government	W/M
Willie S. Reed 180 Daggs Street Belle Rose La. 70341	Industry/Business	B/M
Calvin James 128 Jacobs Street Napoleonville, LA 70390 (985) 369-2843	Government Minorities	B/M
Dale Hymel, Jr. Vice-Chairman P.O. Box 106 Convent, LA 70723-0106 (225) 562-2260	Government	W/M
Howard Jones 3414 Ash Street Vacherie, LA 70090 (225) 265-4334	Government	B/M
Elton Aubert 2740 South Bank Lane Vacherie, La. 70090 (225) 265-8610	Government	B/M
Nickie Monica 1801 W. Airline Hwy. LaPlace, LA 70068 (985) 652-9569	Government	W/M

Cleveland Farlough P. O. Box 528 Reserve, La. 70084-0528 (985) 535-1880		B/M
Ann Tatje 134 Natli Drive LaPlace, LA 70068 (985) 652-9841	Business Women	W/F
Charles Caillouet P.O. Box 5418 Thibodaux, LA 70302 (985) 446-7218	Government	W/M
Darrell Jupiter P.O. Box 6 Napoleonville, LA 70390 (985) 369-6365	Government Minorities	B/M
Joey Bouziga Town of Golden Meadow Golden Meadow, LA 70357 (985) 475-5163	Government	W/M
Herman Bourgeois P.O. Box Drawer 340 Gramercy, LA 70052 (225) 869-4403	Government	W/M
Troas A. Poche P.O. Box 456 Lutcher, LA 70071 (225) 869-5823	Municipal Government Utilities	W/M
Richard Champagne 710 Church Street Lockport, LA 70374 (985) 532-3117	Government	W/M
Don Schwab P.O. Box 6097 Houma, LA 70361 (985) 873-6401	Government	W/M

Wayne Thibodaux Chairman P.O. Box 990 Gray, LA 70359-0990 (985) 872-3237	Government	B/M
Charlotte Randolph P.O. Drawer 5548 Thibodaux, LA 70302 (985) 446-8427	Government	W/F
Albert D. Laque P.O. Box 302 Hahnville, LA 70057 (985) 783-5000	Government	W/M
Debra Dufresne Vial 13979 River Road Luling La. 70070 (985) 331-0120	Community Organizations Tourism	W/F
Desmond Hilarie P. O. Box 11 Hahnville, La. 70057 (985) 783-3030		B/M
Joey Palmisano 1163 West Tunnel Blvd. Houma La. 70360 (985) 872-9823	Small Businesses/Tourism	W/M

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ASSUMPTION		
Kim Torres Secretary Treasurer Assumption Parish Police Jury P.O. Box 520 Napoleonville, LA 70390	Government	W/F
LAFOURCHE		
Ted Falgout Greater Lafourche Port Comm. P.O. Drawer 490 Galliano, LA 70354	Transportation	W/M
Bonnie LaFont Grants Writer City of Thibodaux P.O. Box 5418 Thibodaux, LA 70302	Government	W/F
Gretchen Caillouet Grants Director Lafourche Parish Government P. O. Drawer 5548 Thibodaux, LA 70302		
ST. CHARLES		
Corey Faucheux Dept. of Economic Development P.O. Box 302 Hahnville, LA 70057	Business/Industry Development	W/M
Philip Dufrene Dept. of Planning & Zoning P.O. Box 302 Hahnville, LA 70057	Community Development	
ST. JAMES		
Edie Michel Office of Economic Development P.O. Box 106 Convent, LA 70723	Business/Industry Development	W/F

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Julia Remondet Dept. of Economic Development 1801 W. Airline Hwy LaPlace, LA 70068	Real Estate	W/F
Linda Prudhomme Port of South Louisiana P.O. Box 909 LaPlace, LA 70069-0909	Ports/Waterways	W/F

TERREBONNE

Mart Black, AICP Dept. of Cultural Resources & Economic Development P.O. Box 6097 Houma, LA 70361	Business/Industry Development	W/M
Ed Watson Terrebonne Port Director P.O. Box 6097 Houma, LA 70361	Ports/Waterways	W/M
Patrick Gordon Dept. of Planning & Zoning P.O. Box 6097 Houma, LA 70361	Floodplain Management	W/M

St. Charles Parish 2004 Economic Development Council

Chairman - Carole Schonberg (12/04)
Vice-Chairman - Neal Ayme', Jr. (12/05)

Neal Ayme, Jr., First American Bank, P.O. Box 521, Boutte, LA 70039
Representing : **Financial Institutions** (785-8901) Term Expires: **12/06**

Karen Bergeron, St. Charles Parish Hospital, P.O. Box 87, Luling, LA 70070
Representing : **Health Care** (785-6242) Term Expires: **12/06**

Ricky Bosco, Bosco Brothers, Inc., 711 Apple St., Norco, LA 70079
Representing : **Small Business/East Bank** (764-1253) Term Expires : **12/04**

Roy Breaud, Monsanto Company, P.O. Box 174, Luling, LA 70070
Representing : **Major Industry/West Bank** (785-8211) Term Expires: **12/04**

Rochelle Cancienne, St. Charles Parish Schools, P.O. Box 46, Luling, LA 70070
Representing : **St. Charles Parish Education System** (785-6289) Term : **Unlimited**

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Stan Dufrene, Dow St. Charles Operations, P.O. Box 50, Hahnville, LA 70057
Representing : **Major Industry/West Bank** (783-4472) Term Expires : **12/05**

Lily Galland, Shell Chemical Company, P. O. Box 10, Norco, LA 70079
Representing : **Major Industry/East Bank** (465-6667) Term Expires : **12/06**

Reginald Gaubert, Hahnville Volunteer Fire Dept., P.O. Box 213, Hahnville, LA 70057
Representing: **St. Charles Fireman's Association President** (783-2002)
Term Expires: **12/04**

Ron Guillory, Valero Energy Corporation, P.O. Box 518, Norco, LA 70079
Representing: **Major Industry/East Bank** (764-8611) Term Expires: **12/05**

Bob Harrison, Southern Coffee Service, P.O. Box 1272, Destrehan, LA 70047
Representing : **Small Business/East Bank** (504-738-0411) Term Expires : **12/04**

Betty Haydel, River Road Historical Society, 1 Rosedown Drive, Destrehan, LA 70047
Representing : **Tourist Attraction** (764-6361) Term Expires : **12/06**

C. J. Jones, Bunge North America, 12442 River Road, Destrehan, LA 70047
Representing : **Grain Industry** (764-6516) Term Expires : 1**2/06**

Debbie Kinler, Timeless Images, 131 Lakewood Drive, Luling, LA 70070
Representing : **Small Business/West Bank** (785-8473) Term Expires : **12/04**

Greg Lier, Rathborne Land Company, P. O. Box 157, Harvey, LA 70059
Representing : **Real Estate and Land Development/West Bank** (368-6355)
Term Expires: **12/04**

Luther McCracken, CCi Computer Services, 114 Lakewood Drive, Luling, LA 70070
Representing: **Technology Representative** (785-8000) Term Expires: **12/06**

James Pierce, 31 Bocage Drive, Destrehan, LA 70047
Representing : **Retirement Community** (764-9336) Term Expires : **12/04**

Dan Poulin, Sealy and Company, 150 James Drive East, Suite 140, St. Rose, LA 70087
Representing: **Real Estate and Land Development/East Bank** (504-463-5600)
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Doug Rhodes, Entergy, P.O. Box 61000 L-JEF-365 New Orleans, LA 70161-1000 (504-840-2655)
Representing : **Utilities/Electricity Representative** Term Expires : **12/06**

Carole Schonberg, Latter & Blum Inc./REALTORS, P.O. Box 1299, Boutte, LA 70039
Representing : **Residential Real Estate** (785-8291) Term Expires : **12/04**

Rhonda Sigrist, A Stitch In Time, P.O. Box 52, Luling, LA 70070 (331-9933)
Representing : **St. Charles Business Association President** Term Expires : **12/04**

Debra Dufresne Vial, 135 C Lakewood Drive, Luling, LA 70070 Esperanza Restaurant
Representing : **Small Business/West Bank** (785-8273) Term Expires : **12/04**

Conley Dutriex, P.O. Box 1443, Laplace, LA 70069 (652-7003)
Representing: **River Region Chamber of Commerce** Term: **Unlimited**

Dennis Murphy, La. Technical College/River Parishes Campus, P.O. Drawer AQ, Reserve, LA 70084 (536-4418)
Representing: **Director of La. Technical College/River Parishes Campus**
Term: **Unlimited**

Linda Prudhomme, Port of South Louisiana, P.O. Box 909, Laplace, LA 70069
Representing **Port of South Louisiana** (652-9278) Term: **Unlimited**

George Williamson, United Way, 13207 River Road, P.O. Box 157, Luling, LA 70070
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19 Patrica Ct., Luling, LA 70070 (785-0535) Term: **Unlimited**

Billie Simoneaux (Past-Chairman)
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Assistant Planning Director Phil Dufrene (783-5060)
Public Works/Wastewater Director Greg Bush (783-5100)
Waterworks Director Robert Brou (783-5110)
Work Force Investment Act Director Sharon Simpkins (783-5030)
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