

Ascension Parish, Louisiana Positions 17,000 Acre Super Site for Marketing

Gonzales, Louisiana (August 07, 2014) The Ascension Parish (LA) Council has taken a major step toward creating a 17,000+/- acre industrial mega-plex. At its meeting last evening, the Council approved the adoption of the *West Bank Industrial Overlay* ordinance. This action paves the way for future rezoning of portions of the site to allow for industrial and mixed use development. The effected property, consisting of some 17,000 contiguous acres on the west bank of the Mississippi River, is the largest single tract of developable land with access to the river in the US. The property includes some 10 miles of river frontage and is traversed by 4.5 miles of the Union Pacific Railroads mainline.

Mike Eades, President & CEO of the Ascension Parish Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) expressed his thanks to the Parish Council. "This is a major milestone in turning this dream in to a reality", Eades stated. By providing the mechanism to rezone portions of this property for industrial use, the Parish has placed the area in serious contention for new, major industrial facilities needing access to the Mississippi River", he added. Cautioning that there is still much work to do to realize the full potential of the property, Eades spoke to the potential of the property to create thousands of jobs. "It is our intention to develop this site into a well-planned, "shared services" business and industrial complex, incorporating design concepts that reflect best practices in the areas of sustainability, energy efficiency and intermodal logistics".

Ascension Parish President Tommy Martinez expressed his

excitement for the project. “There are a lot of people to thank for helping us get to this point”, he stated. “The property owners, the Ascension Parish Planning and Zoning Commission and staff, Louisiana Economic Development, the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, AEDC and many other players are on this team. Our ability to continue to create high quality jobs and diversify the Parish’s tax base hinges in large part on this project”, he added.

Ascension Parish Councilman Oliver Joseph, who represents the area of the project, also applauded the Council’s actions. “This project will create much need jobs on the west bank of river”, he said. “Too many working people in this area are having to out-commute for good jobs. Hopefully we can turn the tide and keep them close by”, he added.

Working through its planning and engineering consulting firms CSRS, Inc., AEDC has already engaged outside consultants to study river and rail logistics infrastructure and will issue further work orders in the near future on other required “due diligence” items. AEDC and its partners are also working on various development and financing scenarios.