

# Gonzales City Council gets glowing economic report

***The Advocate*** – GONZALES – Business is good in Gonzales, the head of the Ascension Economic Development Corp. told the City Council on Monday.

Over the last year, the nonprofit has visited 15 businesses, as well as the local hospital, to learn how things are going, and the feedback is positive, said Mike Eades, president and chief executive officer of AEDC.

“Everyone is reporting very good business conditions and good revenues,” said Eades, who describes Gonzales as a “steady market.”

In a report to the City Council, Eades said the AEDC, now in its 10th year, has assisted with more than 20 new construction or expansion projects in the city since it began, representing a projected \$332 million in capital investment.

Among the more recent projects have been \$18.6 million in expansion projects at St. Elizabeth Hospital; the \$12 million construction of a new SpringHill Suites by Marriott; and the \$2.5 million expansion of the Gonzales branch of the international Summit Electric company, which is moving to a new, larger location in the city.

A look at diversification possibilities for the city and parish shows that Gonzales, with its strategic location and its water and wastewater systems, is a prime spot for light manufacturing and re-manufacturing operations, financial services and businesses providing a range of logistical services to industry, Eades said.

The Ascension Economic Development Corp. is funded by Ascension Parish, the city of Gonzales, the Baton Rouge Area

Chamber and the Industrial Development Board of Ascension Parish Inc. to help promote and assist business development.

The City Council on Monday also accepted a .22 caliber rifle from the town of Sorrento, one of the last remnants of the former Sorrento Police Department, [which was abolished in May following a series of scandals](#).

Gonzales Police Chief Sherman Jackson said the rifle will be used in the Junior Police program for youths ages 8 to 12, an eight-week summer program that, near its conclusion, teaches gun safety and target practice.

The City Council also voted to raise rental fees at the Gonzales Civic Center on Irma Boulevard, with rental fees going from \$500 to \$700 for most regular events and from \$400 to \$500 for events by houses of worship, schools and other nonprofits.

The new fees go into effect July 1, but events already booked will be grandfathered at the old rates.

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