



Experience the Ascension Advantage

The bottom section of the cover features an aerial photograph of the Louisiana Edible Creations Center, showing a large industrial facility with multiple buildings and a parking lot. To the right of the aerial view is a map of Louisiana with a yellow highlight indicating the location of the center. The map includes labels for '6.41' and '7.08' near the center, and a highway shield for '51'.

LOUISIANA EDIBLE
CREATIONS
CENTER

*Joining Louisiana Food & Culture
with a Shared use Kitchen Incubator*

OUR 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

HISTORY

AEDC entered its second full year of operations in 2007 embarking on major economic development initiatives for the Parish while improving Ascension Parish's position nationally with site selection consultants and conducting a very aggressive business retention calling program with local businesses.

FUNDING

The Parish of Ascension committed \$341,000 annually to AEDC in 2007. The City of Gonzales also committed \$25,000 annually for AEDC in 2007. More than \$125,000 was raised by AEDC in public and private grants to fund various projects such as the megasite, food incubator, and business park projects.

A 501(c)(3) foundation (Ascension Economic Development Foundation-AEDF) was created in May of 2006 by AEDC to raise additional funds from the private sector and private foundations. More than \$31,000 was raised from the private sector in 2007 by AEDF to fund AEDC projects.

A total of \$35,000 in grants was raised from Entergy Corporation and the Louisiana Department of Economic Development EDAP program by AEDC for fire hydrant infrastructure needs associated with Pearce Foundry's expansion in Prairieville.

More than \$450,000 in grants is pending in 2008 for infrastructure projects with the Dynamic Fuels Biofuels (Tyson) project and for flash freezing equipment for the Louisiana Edible Creations Center from the Louisiana Department of Economic Development.

OPERATIONAL

Operational highlights developed by AEDC include:

- Continued local business retention calling program with use of the Synchronist® software database to measure business climate in the Parish and track expansions. Three expansion projects were uncovered in 2007 by AEDC (Pax, Bevel Tech, and Pearce) through the calling program.
- AEDC staff attended eight industry/site selection conferences and trade shows around the country with regional and state partners to market Ascension Parish.
- Upgraded AEDC website with GIS mapping capabilities and increased demographic and economic information on the Parish and region for site selection consultants.
- Designed GIS maps of business park sites and the Pointe Sunshine megasite.
- Placed over 600 photos of potential movie locations in the Parish on the AEDC website.

PROJECTS

Attraction:

- **Kellogg's Distribution Center, Gonzales - 28 jobs, \$1 million capital investment**—AEDC worked with Baton Rouge Area Chamber in submitting sites for a regional distribution rfp and assisted with workforce training programs.



- **Dynamic Fuels, Geismar (Tyson-Syntroleum joint venture) - 45 jobs, \$126 million in capital investment**—AEDC submitted sites and lists of local plant products in Ascension for an rfp submitted to the Louisiana Department of Economic Development and negotiated a local sales tax rebate for development of a rail spur at the site within the Lion Copolymer facility.



- **Kinder Morgan Terminal, Geismar - 43 jobs, \$37 million in capital investment**—AEDC worked with Kinder officials on negotiating property tax abatements with Assessor Renee Michel on the new facility.

NOTE: AEDC was also a finalist for the Staples Call Center that located in Baton Rouge in Fall of 2007 and for the Shaw "Project Sonoma" project but Ascension was eliminated in the final round of site selection on both projects.

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT: 116 jobs, \$164 million in new investment

Retention and Expansion:

- **Pearce Foundry, Prairieville - 15 jobs, \$3 million in capital investment**—AEDC worked to secure over \$35,000 in grants from Entergy and LA Department of Economic Development to fund two required fire hydrants for the new buildings constructed for the expansion and assisted with state and federal incentives.
- **Pax, Gonzales - 50 jobs, \$1.5 million in capital investment**—AEDC worked with Pax officials on state and federal incentives available for their expansion.
- **Dupont, 5 new jobs - 30 jobs retained, \$66 million in capital investment**—AEDC worked with Dupont's financial consultant, Ernst and Young, on available incentives to modernize the plant.
- **Bevel Tech, Prairieville - 15 jobs, \$2.5 million in capital investment**—AEDC assisted Bevel Tech officials on locating a new site in Ascension Parish in Geismar to accommodate the company's growth plans and assist with State and Federal incentives.



TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT: 85 new jobs, \$73 million in new investment capital

Pending Prospects*

- Gasification Plant
- 2 manufacturing plants
- Biomass Plant
- Movie Theatre
- National Retailer

*As of December 2007

THE ASCENSION ADVANTAGE PLAN-YEAR 2

A bold new five-year plan for economic development named "The Ascension Advantage Plan" was approved in 2006 by the AEDC board to diversify the existing business base and the local economy. Private funds raised through the AEDF funded these initiatives with matching grants from the Louisiana Department of Economic Development and AEDC providing staff support.

TARGETED INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Ascension Megasite Project

AEDC started the process of developing a "shovel-ready" or "certified" megasite within Ascension Parish for "mega" projects considering the Parish in late 2006. AEDC contracted with Peake Consulting to review available sites and a final site was selected in April of 2007. AEDC contracted with Peake Consulting to certify 1,000 acres on Pointe Houmas, marketed nationally as "Pointe Sunshine," with final certification on the property on December 13, 2007. Pointe Sunshine is the only certified deep water megasite in the United States and along the Mississippi River.



AEDC acquired an option to purchase agreement on the property and had Phase I, wetlands, geotechnical, and utility assessment reports completed on the property and developed GIS maps that will be marketed to site selection consultants around the country. A website with all the information on the megasite was created at www.louisianamegasites.com and www.deepwatermegasites.com.

The development of the megasite will put Ascension Parish on the radar of national site selection consultants and real estate executives and give the Parish an advantage for large megaprojects considering the Gulf Coast.



Louisiana Edible Creations Center

Developed in 2006 as Louisiana's first business incubator for the food industry to develop the State's unique cuisine, the Louisiana Edible Creations Center (LECC) at the Lamar Dixon Expo Center has expanded to accommodate more than a dozen active tenants now utilizing the facility. Some of the start-up companies producing food items, with some already available in area grocery stores and local farmers markets, include Jazzy Bird Café Frozen Espresso Shots, Omi's Remoulade Sauce, Chef KD fish fry, Chef JP Pastalaya and Jambalaya, Chef Jerry Folse, and many others. AEDC hired food consultant Gaye Sandoz to assist clients with product development, packaging, labeling, and marketing their products. AEDC received over \$17,000 in grants from the Louisiana Department of Economic Development for the LECC to purchase packaging equipment in 2007 and has a \$50,000 grant pending in 2008 to purchase flash freezing equipment at the LECC. Information on the food incubator can be found at www.laediblecreations.org

Business Park Development

Funded in part by a grant from Tier II grant program from the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, a feasibility study for the development of an office and business park was undertaken by AEDC to interest national business park developers in Ascension Parish. Taimera Management Company developed the report including recommendation of three final sites, park layout, and targeted developers. AEDC is currently working with local property owners and national developers to create a first class business/industrial park for Ascension Parish that will attract more office and light industrial-related projects to the Parish. Information on the business park project can be found at www.ascensionbusinessparkproject.com.

Downstream Industry Plan

In Summer of 2007, AEDC contracted with Baton Rouge based-SSA Consultants to assist AEDC in targeting downstream specialty chemical companies to utilize streams

BASF

produced at commodity-based plants in Ascension for possible co-location opportunities. BASF officials in Geismar agreed to become the first pilot plant to participate in the project. AEDC in partnership with BASF will be targeting specialty chemical companies in partnership with the chemical industry association group SOCMA including participation in the SOCMA-sponsored INFORMEX trade show in New Orleans in early 2008.

AEDC has also received interest from other area plant officials about participating in future efforts and will be working with other local plants on other downstream opportunities in 2008 and beyond.

OUR RESULTS (as of December 2007)

RETENTION

Jobs Expanded.....	85
Total Capital Investment.....	\$73 million
Jobs Retained.....	30
Visits to Local Companies.....	19
Visits to Local Company Headquarters Out of State.....	5
Pending Jobs.....	135
Pending Capital Investment.....	\$450 million

ATTRACTION

New Jobs.....	116
New Capital Investment.....	\$164 million
Prospect Visits.....	25
Potential Pending Jobs.....	755
Pending Capital Investment.....	\$78 million

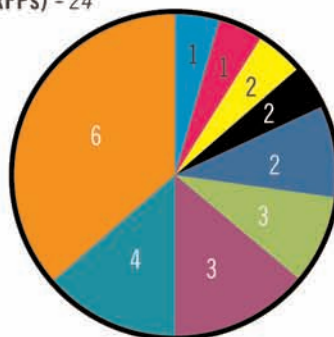
MOVIE LOCATIONS

Films shot in Ascension.....	2
Scout Visits.....	8
RFPS.....	22
Pending Films.....	2

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS RESPONDED (RFPs) - 24

Industries Represented in RFPs sent

1 Retail
1 Metal Fabrication
2 Biofuels Plants
2 Ethanol Plants
2 Specialty Chemical Manufacturing
3 Food Processing
3 Steel Processing
4 Call Center
6 Manufacturing



Business Retention Calling Program Survey Results*:

- 57% of companies interviewed were in the "industrial goods" sector; 15 percent were in the consumer goods sector with the remaining in utilities, consumer services, retail, advanced manufacturing, and building and construction sectors
- 53% of companies interviewed have less than one hundred employees with 36% having more than 100 employees and less than 500 employees
- 61% of companies are in the "growing" life cycle stage
- 68% of companies will introduce new products in the next two years
- 82% of companies' products are sold outside of the local area
- 79% of companies report increasing company sales
- 58% of companies report their market share of products is increasing
- 74% of companies plan an expansion in the next three years
- 100% report less than 20% of their sales from exports
- 56% of companies report their employment needs will increase
- 73% of companies report positive corporate officials opinion of Ascension Parish

Business Retention Key Issues

- Concerns with residential intrusion on existing chemical facilities
- Stable workforce, concern for filling retiring workforce
- Highest rankings for community services-police, schools
- Lowest rankings for community services-zoning, roads, planning

Full business retention report found at www.ascensionedc.com/researchreports.html

*=sample size of 39 companies interviewed from January 2006-December 2007



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