



EXPERIENCE THE

ASCENSION

ADVANTAGE

2019 Annual Report

2019 WAS A VERY STRONG YEAR FOR ASCENSION PARISH.

One area of substantial growth; business recruitment. Over the year, we generated 31 new leads with 20 of those evaluating a location in Ascension Parish. In addition, we had a record number of leads and visits to the 17,000-acre RiverPlex MegaPark on the west bank of the parish. We are excited to see our efforts in 2019 be a catalyst for continued economic growth in Ascension.

At Ascension EDC, we make it a priority to visit our local businesses and cultivate those relationships. We conducted more than 50 local business visits to help existing industry grow and expand in Ascension Parish. Of those visits, ten had potential expansion projects in evaluation for the near future. During our time spent with them, many touted their biggest accomplishment was having a record sales year or an enhanced safety program. We call this the *Ascension Advantage*.

In 2019, we had some major recruitment and expansion wins. Sugarfield Spirits, the first distillery in the City of Gonzales will open in 2020, providing not only beverage manufacturing but more tourism opportunities for the City and Ascension Parish. Cornerview Plaza also went through an extensive renovation, adding to the retail shopping opportunities in Ascension. Two major expansion projects we are proud of include Methanex's G3 methanol project and BASF's MDI expansion. We are excited to see the continued growth and success of both companies in Ascension.

As we continue to invest in our sites, in 2019 we completed two site certifications through the Louisiana Economic Development program, one large and one small; the Noel Site, part of the RiverPlex MegaPark on the west bank and the Double D site, which is part of the Heritage Crossing Development in the City of Gonzales. Through this program, the state qualifies industrial and commercial sites based on zoning restrictions, title work, environmental studies, soil analysis and surveys.



We've had a tremendous year of economic growth and are thankful to have amazing partners working with us to make the Ascension Advantage a reality. In Ascension, we really do have it all: business, tourism, parks & recreation, safety, top-notch education, and diverse shopping and housing options. We can't wait to see what 2020 has in store!

KATE MACARTHUR

President & CEO, Ascension Economic Development Corporation



ASCENSION PARISH OVERVIEW

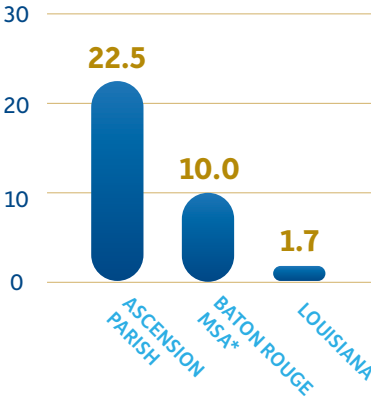
WORKFORCE & UNEMPLOYMENT



CIVILIAN
LABOR FORCE

Numbers represented in thousands

OCTOBER 2009 – OCTOBER 2019



EMPLOYMENT

	ASCENSION PARISH		BATON ROUGE MSA*	
	EMPLOYMENT	UNEMPLOYMENT	EMPLOYMENT	UNEMPLOYMENT
OCTOBER 2009	48,608	3,103	417,737	30,538
OCTOBER 2019	60,767	2,582	471,280	21,973
VARIANCE %	25.0	-1.9	12.8	-2.3

*The Baton Rouge MSA consists of the following nine parishes: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, West Baton Rouge, & West Feliciana.

Civilian Labor Force: The number of people residing in the specified area who are either working or actively looking for work. The Civilian Labor Force is the sum of employment and unemployment.

Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission

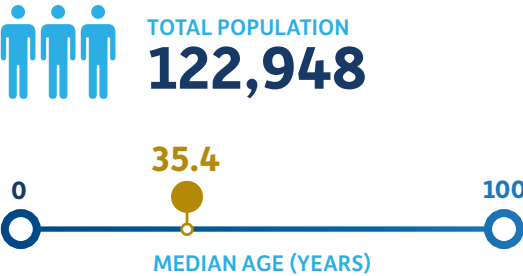
AVERAGE
WEEKLY WAGES*



*Data Represents the average weekly wage paid in the calendar quarter by employers in Ascension who were covered under Louisiana’s unemployment compensation system.

Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission

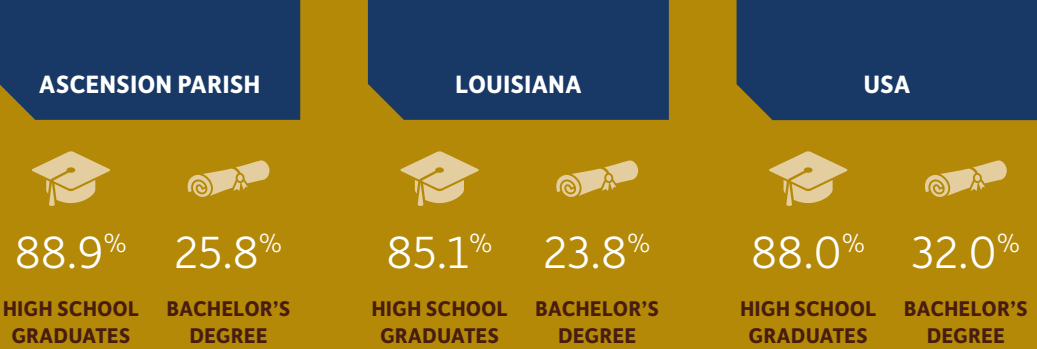
POPULATION



Source: US Census Bureau – American Community Survey S0101

EDUCATIONAL
ATTAINMENT

Source:
US Census Bureau – American
Community Survey



OCCUPATIONS

	2010	2017	% CHANGE 2010 - 2017
PRODUCTION, TRANSPORTATION, & MATERIAL MOVING	5,709	9,860	72.7%
SALES & OFFICE	5,440	8,113	49.1%
MANAGEMENT, PROFESSIONAL & RELATED SERVICES	18,320	20,031	9.3%

Source: US Census Bureau – American Community Survey S2405

& INDUSTRY

	2010	2017	% CHANGE 2010 - 2017
AGRICULTURE, FISHING, HUNTING, FORESTRY & MINING	298	625	109.7%
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, HOSPITALITY & FOOD SERVICE	2,432	3,959	62.8%
PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, MANAGEMENT & ADMIN	3,657	4,863	33.0%
MANUFACTURING	7,450	8,216	10.3%

Source: US Census Bureau – American Community Survey S2405



INDUSTRY LOCATIONS & EXPANSIONS

2019 RECRUITMENT SUCCESS FOR ASCENSION PARISH



Sugarfield Spirits Co. will build a planned 5,000 sq. ft. distillery using locally grown sugarcane to make vodka, rum and gin, in 2020.

The up-and-coming distillery has chosen Gonzales, Louisiana for its location. Conveniently located between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, the City of Gonzales is the perfect spot for distillery and brewery locations, allowing for expansion of tourism opportunities. Sugarfield's position in the food & beverage manufacturing industry also meets the diversification goals of business recruitment.

"Sugarfield Spirits is planning to break ground on our distillery in 2019. We look forward to planting roots in Gonzales and flourishing within the Ascension Parish community."

- THOMAS SOLTAU | OWNER OF SUGARFIELD SPIRITS

As the first distillery to open in Ascension Parish, the location will be part of the Louisiana Distillery Trail putting the City of Gonzales on the map for a new form of tourism.



2019 EXPANSION SUCCESS FOR ASCENSION PARISH



In 2019, **Methanex** announced the company would make a \$1.3 billion - \$1.4 billion capital investment to build a third methanol plant in Geismar, Louisiana.

The project will join two existing methanol plants in Geismar and represent a cumulative capital investment of more than \$2.5 billion for methanol facilities in Ascension Parish, south of Baton Rouge. The three Methanex plants in Geismar will represent one of the largest methanol complexes in the world.

“As the global leader in the methanol industry, we evaluate growth opportunities around the world, and we are pleased that Ascension Parish will become home to our largest production site globally, with production capability of approximately 4 million metric tons per year.”

- MARK ALLARD | VICE PRESIDENT OF METHANEX NORTH AMERICA

The existing Geismar complex will grow to 230 total direct jobs, with the facilities supporting another 1,500 indirect jobs in the Capital Region.

62

NEW DIRECT
JOBS

\$80,000
+ benefits

AVERAGE
ANNUAL SALARY

Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in another 301 new indirect jobs, for a total of **363 new jobs** in Ascension Parish and the Capital Region.



2019 PROJECT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

	CAPITAL INVESTMENT	NEW JOBS
BASF	\$87,000,000	--
METHANEX	\$1,350,000,000	62
REAGENT CHEMICAL	\$10,000,000	1
WOLSELEY INDUSTRIAL GROUP	\$12,500,000	5
ZACHRY	(Confidential)	100
HIGHWAY TRANSPORT	\$14,000,000	50
CONSOLIDATED ELECTRICAL DISTRICT	(Confidential)	20
T BAKER SMITH	\$3,250,000	5
	\$1,476,750,000	243

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF
THE 2019 PROJECT WINS
ON ASCENSION
PARISH

(\$1.5 BILLION OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT)



2020 INITIATIVES

BUSINESS RETENTION
& EXPANSION

In 2020, Ascension EDC will continue to build on our existing retention and expansion program, while incorporating our “Work Ready Community” initiative. This workforce initiative is in partnership with the Ascension Parish Schools and the Ascension Chamber of Commerce. This year will be an important year for local partnerships to reach new and expanding business.

INDUSTRY
DIVERSIFICATION

Ascension Parish is a place where many industries can thrive and have success. In 2020, Ascension EDC will further lead generation activities to diversify our economy, introducing new industries to the Ascension Advantage. Key industries include Food & Beverage Manufacturing, Advanced Manufacturing, Steel, Warehouse & Distribution, Information Technology/Software and Film Production/Entertainment.

COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

We welcome entrepreneurs and rising thought leaders of our community to explore business ventures in Ascension Parish. We will work to provide more opportunities for these entrepreneurs to connect and network. As a part of our downtown redevelopment and retail initiative, we are exploring the possibility of introducing a Façade Improvement Grant proposal. We also plan to take a look at updating economic development district lines within the Parish and explore how to better market incentive programs and Opportunity Zones.

Our 30-year relationship with Gonzales and sister-city, Meylan, France, offers a unique opportunity for cultural and business exchange. Our team plans to explore an economic development component via a business exchange.

INFRASTRUCTURE
& FUNDING

Over the next year, the Ascension EDC will work to increase economic competitiveness by making more efforts towards foreign direct investment and the creation of an international advisory committee. We will continue to have a focus on infrastructure development on the west bank of Ascension Parish and look into a developer study for the RiverPlex MegaPark site. To ensure the EDC’s mission of implementing economic development programs to the benefit of the citizens of Ascension Parish are fruitful, we will also explore options for more long-term, stable funding for AEDC.

BRAND GROWTH
& MARKETING

In Ascension Parish, we understand the differentiators of our community and the benefits that come with living and working here. Our story is well-known in our community, but in 2020, we will explore new ways of how to share our story with others. Our brand growth this year will include strategies for internal and external communication, a larger focus on marketing our Parish to industry, workforce and residents, and leveraging partner resources and relationships.



ADDITIONAL local sales & use
tax will be generated



ADDITIONAL ad valorem tax
revenues will be generated on
improved land & inventories



NEW JOBS for Ascension
Parish residents

ASCENSION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BOARD

Kirk Boudreaux, Gonzales City Council

Janet Britton, Eatel

Robert Burgess, Our Lady of the Lake Ascension, Retired

John Cagnolatti, Ascension Parish Council

Derrick Coco, Eastman Chemical

William Dawson, Ascension Parish Council

Doug Diez, MEI Properties

Don Hanna, Saurage Rotenberg Commercial Real Estate

Roger Keese, Shell Chemical, retired

Brent Landry, Donaldsonville Council

Chuck Leblanc, Bourg Insurance

Dwight Poirrier, Attorney at Law

Kevin Schexnayder, Hancock Whitney Bank

Don Schexnayre, Sorrento Council

ASCENSION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION STAFF

Kate MacArthur, President & CEO

Lisa Laws, Project Manager

Misty Taillon, Administrative Assistant

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!



📍 6967 Highway 22-A
Sorrento, LA 70778

✉ info@ascensionedc.com
🌐 www.ascensionedc.com
🌐 www.riverplexmegapark.com

📞 225.675.1750
📠 225.675.1751