



2021: Year in Review

The following is a recap of the work performed by Vermilion Economic Development staff (unless noted otherwise). For monthly reports please refer to the website: www.developvermilion.org.

Activities are grouped into four major areas of focus: Business Development, Existing Business Assistance, Community Development & Dedicated Economic Development Effort.

INSPIRING & RECRUITING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Business
Development

Strategy: Welcome entrepreneurs & assist with start-up

- Reached out to 39 new businesses; Counseled 27 pre-ventures
- Promoted opening of 18 new businesses through "What's New" page & social media
- Connected with local venture capitalist expert to discuss opportunities in the area

Strategy: Engage in lead development & marketing to outside investors

- Re-Evaluated Community Competitiveness scores with the help of LA Economic Development
- Worked with Prospects Foil, Range, Flake, Craft & Project Beaker and Frontier on issues related to land acquisition, permitting, engineering, vendors, compliance, incentives, & more
- Completed 4 property database updates; Maintained 55 locations on LA Site Selection website
- Maintained contract with Site Location Partnership; Engaged 8 Dallas & 6 Atlanta site selectors
- Attended "Meet the Consultants" event & logistics meeting with national development experts
- Compiled data about parish & target industries - Agrifood, Industrial Equipment & Biochem
- Created annual Vermilion Parish business database & Top Employer listing
- Answered 4 requests for information/real estate inquiries
- Provided updated demographic reports & statistics to parish, municipalities & the public
- Developed one-page marketing flyer to aid in Vermilion's recruitment efforts

Strategy: Support agriculture, aquaculture & fisheries to maintain uniqueness

- Met with New Orleans-based restaurant group to discuss relationship with local producers
- Created cattle farm/herd count map to understand geography of industry
- Provided USDA Added-Value Producer Grant recommendation letter to Gonsulin Land & Cattle
- Identified potentially harmful commercial fishing legislation; Coordinated with industry pros
- Completed assessment of Vermilion Cattlemen survey - 147 farmer - through a USDA grant & partnership with Vermilion Parish Cattleman's Association, LSU AgCenter, & Farm Bureau

Existing Business Assistance

RETAINING & EXPANDING COMPANIES FOR A SELF-SUPPORTED ECONOMY

Strategy: Maintain relationship with business community through technical assistance & training

- Assisted 63 businesses with specific requests and/or opportunities
- Conducted 17 business visits; Prioritized "Economic Driver" companies
- Worked on business expansion projects: Beaker, Bacon, Coop, Dish
- Held Business Tune-Up on Small Business Marketing with 22 attendees
- Prepared Free Marketing Resources Self-Help Guide
- Connected area banks to information on United Way of Acadiana's Bank On Program
- Launched No-Cost Energy Assessment Program in coordination with UL's Engineering Department
- Connected 18 eligible companies to Mainstreet At Your Side Grant; Provided reference letters for Blush Boutique & La Palmera Spa
- Promoted Women United's Microgrant availability
- Actively participated in Vermilion Chamber; Member of Business Advocacy Committee - Assisted with Constitutional Amendment research



Strategy: Assume meaningful role in workforce development efforts

- Launched community job board; Marketed openings at 29 companies
- Planned outreach strategies with Acadiana Workforce Solutions
- Attended VIP Meet-up with SLCC's new chancellor, Dr. Vincent June
- Assisted 3 jobseekers with their resume, job hunt & unemployment benefits
- Planned & hosted Employer Workshop (14) & Jobseeker Workshop (12)
- Planned & hosted job fair with 71 attendees, 31 companies & 5 resources
- Introduced SLCC stakeholders to industry pros; Discussed welding curriculum
- Promoted United Way of Acadiana's Education Summit to local partners
- Prepared employment projects for Louisiana Workforce Commission



Strategy: Encourage local spending to have a self-supported economy

- Provided marketing services & supplies to 19 companies for Small Business Saturday & extended promotions throughout the season; Promoted local holiday events/sales; Secured free media coverage
- Highlighted business news; Keep It Local Spotlights on Acadiana Clean Air & Petite Engines; Promoted new eateries through press release & quotes



Community Development

SUPPORTING IMPROVEMENTS & PARTNERSHIPS TO CREATE BETTER COMMUNITIES

Strategy: Participate in emergency response, disaster recovery, infrastructure & risk mitigation initiatives

- Maintained a suite of COVID-19-related materials & online guide
- Outreach to community regarding freeze & storm damages; Collected responses
- Provided LA Rental Assistance information to landlords & their tenants
- Distributed IEDC Disaster Preparedness & Economic Recovery Series & other resources to locals
- Cataloged public investment projects for display online
- Advocated for LA 14 Overlay funding, LA Hwy 13 & broadband projects with legislative delegates

Strategy: Develop Vermilion's next generation of leaders

- Worked with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Acadiana on outreach to potential mentors
- Served as Leadership Vermilion Alumni Secretary/Treasurer to align with program administrators
- Worked with Leadership Vermilion class on program improvements & recruitment strategy

Strategy: Improve our "product" & increase marketability of parish

- Coordinated with Acadiana Center for the Arts to gain support for local projects & artists
- Served on United Way of Acadiana board, Diversity/Equity & Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee & Chaired Strategic Planning Committee to improve earnings, education, and essentials for residents
- Partnered with QSA & Twin Parish Port to evaluate resources for turfing & lighting Erath fields
- Explored opportunities for growth & collaboration with Nehemiah Projects of Acadiana & Bethel Church in order to leverage Abbeville's various zones & designations
- Entered into Partnership Agreement with Twin Parish Port; Secured USDA RISE Grant for food hub
- Evaluated Liberty Rice Mill (Kaplan) highest and best use; Outreach to land owner & municipality
- Assisted in the marketing of local festivals & events; Coordinated with local PR contacts
- Created 3 public service announcements for billboard displays



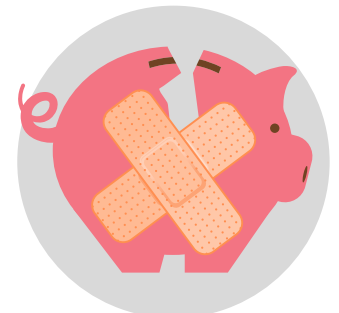
Holiday PSAs



Local Event Promotion



Community Dialogue



Disaster Recovery

Dedicated Economic Development Effort

MAINTAINING A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION WORKING FOR VERMILION'S SUCCESS

Strategy: Increase long-term financial stability

- Secured \$63,500 in public funds & \$20,000 commitment for 2022
- Secured commitment from 8 private stakeholders for \$12,833

- Maintained good standing status for federal grant opportunities
- Received allocation from LED/EDA Grant of \$10,000 for pandemic recovery work
- Designed Vermilion-branded merchandise for future sales

Strategy: Follow political subdivision protocols

- Completed trailing paperwork for 2020 election; Debriefed with community members on parcel fee proposition & funding
- Held 12 public meetings; Provided progress monthly reporting & outreach to stakeholders including meeting with new Jurors
- 100% completion of LA Ethics Board training by staff & board
- Maintained audited financial records & balanced budget
- Submitted Records Retention Schedule to the SOS
- Attended 11 professional development courses/webinars

Strategy: Expand parish's relevance in the state

- Participated in Congressional redistricting meetings
- Worked with NOLA.com to film "Lost in Louisiana" web series pilot
- Coordinated a week of programming with KADN at area businesses & attractions
- Coordinated "economic driver" outreach with regional & state partners
- Worked with regional partners on marketing & recruitment strategies
- Served as parish rep for Acadiana Economic Development Council, One Acadiana, & LIDEA

Strategy: Maintain relationship with elected officials; share ideas & resources

- Introduced LA Development Communities meeting with Abbeville, Erath, Kaplan, and LED; Served on Abbeville's committee - promoted survey & town hall meeting participation
- Participated in regional broadband stakeholder meeting & coordinated visit with State Director
- Assisted Kaplan, Erath & Maurice with AARP, Brownfields & USDA grants
- Coordinated project to study sewer & water limitations in parish; Received EPA funds to assist
- Worked with Abbeville to understand economic impact of AA Comeaux Park improvements

Strategy: Build awareness for impact, services & partnerships

- 27 Press Releases & Media Mentions
- 25 e-Newsletters Published
- 719 Social Media Posts Across 3 Accounts