



2020: 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 57 new businesses, counseled 7 pre-ventures
- Created "Made in Vermilion" product/business listing; Opened public submissions
- Published a comprehensive Incentives & Programs guide; Distributed through Vermilion Chamber
- Connected with local venture capitalist expert to discuss opportunities in the area

Strategy: Engage in lead development & marketing to outside investors

- Maintained over 50 locations on site portal & LED Site Selection website
- Toured Stine Lumber & former Fruit of the Loom; Assisted in locating leads for properties
- Reviewed Deere Park's site certification; Secured update from new property manager
- Worked with Acadiana Planning Commission on Abbeville Prospectus content & launch
- Maintained contract with Site Location Partnership to engage with relocating companies
- Reviewed trade show/industry information & engaged in promotions to site selectors
- Answered 11 requests for information/real estate inquiries
- Worked with Prospect Skin, Spritzer, Graze, Range, Foil, Ernest, Blue on issues related to feasibility, land acquisition, permitting, engineering, vendors, compliance, incentives, & more
- Met with the Vermilion Parish Assessor & regional rep to discuss the Industrial Tax Exemption program and a process for interested parties

Strategy: Support agriculture, aquaculture & fisheries to maintain uniqueness

- Coordinated meeting with New Orleans restaurateur rep & local producers to build product lines
- Conducted Vermilion Cattlemen survey with 147 farmers (Fulcrum Sales) & met with leadership to discuss plans for the industry; Began Phase 1 of Cattle/Beef Study (Impact Development)
- Funded Phase 2 of Cattle/Beef Study (processor feasibility) with \$3,500 in sponsored funds
- Twin Parish Port secured USDA grant for Seafood Hub Feasibility Study; Assisted where needed
- Attended Fisheries Forward LA Seafood Summit & participated in a presentation by UL Lafayette
- Used LA Seafood Study data to assess needs & build strategies for producers in the area

Existing Business Assistance

RETAINING & EXPANDING COMPANIES FOR A SELF-SUPPORTED ECONOMY

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

- Assisted 370 businesses with specific requests and/or opportunities
- Co-hosted 15 business webinars with 4,930 attendees!
- Worked with Opportunity Machine to create Click-to-STARTUP video series featuring best practices for small businesses
- Surveyed 68 businesses regarding affects of COVID-19
- Promoted VP Women in Business events & networking group
- Actively participated in Vermilion Chamber; Member of Business Advocacy Committee
- Coordinated business pandemic-related outreach with local partners; Cataloged concerns & provided resources - 500+ companies identified for participation in Main Street Recovery Program & 150 were connected with program details over three-day campaign
- Worked with commercial lenders to understand Payroll Protection Program & new financing tools
- Conducted outreach to minority business owners to improve equity & inclusion efforts; Partnered with BlackListed & One Acadiana to feature black-owned businesses



Strategy: Assume meaningful role in workforce development efforts



- Assisted 12 jobseekers with their resume, job hunt & unemployment benefits
- Marketed job openings at 8 local companies/agencies
- Worked with SLCC Gulf Area Campus, UL Lafayette & LEDA to market job fairs
- Launched Link & Learn program - low-cost, open wireless for qualifying families
- Worked with VPSB on WorkKeys strategy for connecting students & employers
- Joined Early Childhood Development Network to strengthen cradle-to-career pipeline; Authored letter of support regarding House Bill 676 - "Free the Transcript" - to help adult learners re-enroll
- Surveyed local employers on their "Talent Gap" & worked with 55 by 25 consortium

Strategy: Encourage local spending to have an economy that's self-supported

- Coordinated business spotlights with KADN on recovering businesses
- Provided marketing services & supplies to 25 companies for Small Business Saturday & extended promotions throughout the season; Coordinated reduced-rate advertising; Promoted local holiday events & sales
- Participated in Acadiana to Geaux program to solicit support for area restaurants



Community Development

SUPPORTING IMPROVEMENTS & PARTNERSHIPS TO CREATE BETTER COMMUNITIES

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

- Maintained "Disaster Relief" webpage & materials for Hurricane-Delta-affected residents
- Coordinated supply distribution & resource-matching to local & neighboring communities
- Created a suite of COVID-19-related materials & online guide
- Located short-term rentals & hotel vacancy data for displaced businesses
- Attended Rural Broadband Mini-Summit to discuss new opportunities due to FCC changes
- Worked with Census Bureau team to promote participation

Strategy: Develop Vermilion's next generation of leaders

- Coordinated & emceed Leadership Vermilion Commerce Day
- Met with LV Alumni & Leadership Institute of Acadiana to explore new learning opportunities
- Coordinated event with Conversations Starts on "Race in Vermilion Parish" to improve communication and work on community-led solutions to equity & inclusion

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

- Served on Acadiana Arts Council board; Shared resources for artists & artisans who want to commercialize their work
- Served on Kiwanis of Abbeville Educator Awards committee; Assisted with promotions
- Served on United Way of Acadiana board, Capital Campaign Committee & Chair of Strategic Planning Committee to improve earnings, education, and essentials for residents
- Partnered with Acadiana Veterans Alliance to bring resources to servicemen & women
- Attended Nunu's Creative Conversation Sessions to bring new ideas & tactics to Vermilion
- Conducted economic impact analysis & researched designs for outdoor tourism/cultural venue



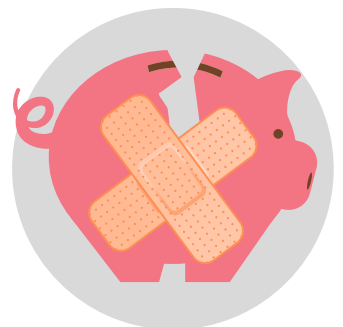
Holiday PSAs



Local Event Promotion



Community Dialogue



Disaster Recovery

Dedicated Economic Development Effort

MAINTAINING A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION WORKING FOR VERMILION'S SUCCESS

Strategy: Build awareness for impact, services & partnerships

53

Press Releases & Media Mentions

14

Presentations Given

109

Municipal Issues Addressed*

142

Subscribers Added to Audience, +43%

51

e-Newsletters Published

759

Social Media Posts Across 3 Accounts

Strategy: Increase long-term financial stability

- Secured \$52,000 in public funds & \$20,000 commitment for 2021
- Secured commitment from 9 private stakeholders for \$12,333
- Petitioned State Bond Commission for sustainable funding proposition on parish; Election held in November; Proposition failed, but gained new awareness & support from parish officials & residents; Created ad hoc committee to evaluate next steps
- Promoted VEDA's role in the community through a new video, testimonials, & other collateral materials
- Maintained good standing status for federal grant opportunities; Secured \$22,500 in reimbursements from USDA grant

Strategy: Expand parish's relevance in the state

- Participated in Congressional redistricting meetings
- Served as Vermilion Parish representative for Acadiana Economic Development Council, One Acadiana, & LIDEA
- Nominated Vermilion Parish representatives to One Acadiana's board (three new positions obtained)
- Worked with regional partners on collaborative marketing & strategic planning for Acadiana
- Attended weekly debrief & resource meetings with partners during COVID-19 stay-at-home orders
- Coordinated "economic driver" outreach with Louisiana Economic Development
- Provided letter of support for LED's EDA Grant; Applied to provide technical assistance as subcontractor

Strategy: Follow political subdivision protocols

- Held 12 public meetings; Provided progress monthly reporting & outreach to stakeholders
- 100% completion of LA Ethics Board training by staff & board members
- Maintained audited financial records; Answered 1 public records request

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