

## **Committee seeks to build renewable energy industry in Acadiana**

**Lafayette, LA**— The Acadiana Renewable Energy Committee has been formed to establish Acadiana's position as a leader in the renewable energy industry. The committee was created in response to the growing Federal commitment to clean and renewable energy and as an effort to maintain Acadiana's place as a leader in energy production and services.

The committee is spearheaded by Dr. Mark Zappi, Dean of the College of Engineering at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, along with Chad Hanks, President of the Lafayette Parish Farm Bureau, and Gregg Gothreaux, President and CEO of the Lafayette Economic Development Authority (LEDA).

"The Greater Acadiana area is primed to position itself as the go-to location for alternative energy industries because of the area's vast manufacturing capacity; UL's strong research emphasis on both basic and applied R&D in the field; the region's very capable engineering and technology workforce; and the spirit of inventiveness that has been the hallmark of this region," says Zappi. "This region can easily be known for both the use of alternative energy and being a key global design and manufacturing hub for the technologies— much like we already are for the petroleum industry."

Key stakeholders in the region make up the committee, including representatives from state and local government, members of the agricultural community, researchers from UL Lafayette and the LSU Ag Center, economic development officials and business leaders. State Representative Jack Mountoucet, State Senator Mike Michot, U.S. Representatives Charles Boustany and Charles Melancon, and U.S. Senators David Vitter and Mary Landrieu will participate in the group. The committee's first meeting, held at the LEDA Resource Center, had over 50 participants in attendance.

The committee will analyze regional strengths for alternative energy production, the recruitment of renewable energy businesses to the area, and build upon identified strengths including existing energy infrastructure, a well-trained workforce, suitable climate conditions and natural resources, and ample expertise in renewable energy technologies at UL Lafayette.

The committee seeks to raise awareness about Acadiana's potential for renewable energy by hosting in the future forums and lectures open to the public. For more information on the committee, contact Josephine Ennis, LEDA Research Associate, at 337-593-1400.

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