

Workforce solutions

Acadiana's plan of action

The LEDA staff meets with hundreds of businesses every year and according to them, the lack of a skilled workforce is the number one challenge that inhibits their ability to grow. However, this problem isn't unique to Lafayette— it can be seen across the state and country.

As a first step to find solutions to Acadiana's workforce needs, the Louisiana Workforce Commission held the South Louisiana Workforce Summit in Lafayette bringing together business leaders, human resource managers, workforce development professionals, and top State officials.

Tim Barfield, Executive Director of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, was joined by panelists from Louisiana Economic Development, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, the Department of Education, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, and the Department of Social Services to discuss workforce development resources and to explore solutions to Louisiana's workforce issues with the attendees.

As a follow-up to Acadiana Region breakout session held at the Summit, Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) 40 and 41— representing Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary and Vermilion Parishes— have recruited volunteers for a WIB Workgroup that will move forward on the ideas discussed during the session.

Some of the key topics that will be considered by the workgroup include: out-of-state recruiting; employer-specific training programs; organizing focus groups to identify workforce problems and solutions; changing perceptions about careers in specific industries; retraining and placement of veterans; connecting employers with Acadiana Society of Human Resource Managers services; offender population training and quality job placement; public utilization of laworks.net; regular releases of workforce and labor market data; and simplifying the process for businesses to receive assistance through the WIBs.

These topics and more will be discussed at Workgroup meetings throughout 2009. The meetings are open to the public; and the business community is invited to attend. For information on upcoming meeting dates and locations contact Glenn Dugas at (337) 706-1216 or glenn@cox-internet.com or Chris Dunbar at (337) 982-5678 or jtpa40@aol.com.

Occupational Projections 2006-2016

There are more than 100 top-demand occupations in the Acadiana region. Of those occupations:

- Almost one-third have an average hourly wage that exceeds \$17.
- Office and Administrative Support occupations have the highest number of openings with 1,500.
- Registered Nurses have an annual demand of 220 workers, representing half of all Health Care occupations.

Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission

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Learn more inside:

- 1985 vs. 2008 page 2
- LEDA Job Fair page 3
- Forbes Top 10 page 4
- Digital Media page 5
- LEDA briefs page 6



Comparing Lafayette's workforce: 1985 vs. 2008

With the recent uncertainty on Wall Street and the generally dire mood about the national economy, people throughout Acadiana may wonder if we are about to see a repeat of the economic downturn that occurred in the 1980s. So far, it seems that we have bucked the trend that is putting a squeeze on the rest of the nation. Now, that oil and gas prices are dropping and gasoline is less than \$2 a gallon again, it's natural to feel concerned given Lafayette's boom and bust model of the past. But, by taking a closer look at the numbers, specifically the employment sector percentages in 1985 and in 2008, we see evidence that Lafayette's economic make-up has changed significantly in the last 20 years—making us less susceptible to an energy-related downturn.

Although oil and gas is still the backbone of Acadiana's overall economy; in Lafayette, mining (oil and gas extraction) falls behind a number of other sectors in terms of its share of the total workforce. Currently, mining represents 11.2% of the workforce, where in 1985 it employed a full 17% of the workforce. When the oil bust occurred in the 1980's, following the O.P.E.C. crisis, south Louisiana experienced a severe economic downturn that lasted into the 1990s. In 1986, unemployment was 14% in the Lafayette area—more than 10 percentage points higher than the 2008 year-to-date average of 3.1%. Much of Lafayette's success today can be traced to the efforts made in the last 15 years to diversify our industry base, while at the same time continuing to support and grow the reemerging oil and gas industry.

In 1985, health care, leisure/hospitality, and information weren't even tracked as individual sectors of Louisiana's workforce. Now, health care is one of the largest and most notable industries in Lafayette—employing nearly 13% of the workforce and receiving recognition throughout the state for its premier facilities and services. Leisure and hospitality, which includes Lafayette's thriving tourism business, has grown to employ nearly 10% of the workforce. Bringing people in from around the world creates a ripple effect impacting the larger economy through retail sales and other services. At 2.3%, information may be the smallest employing sector, but it has potential for growth as Lafayette is increasingly carving out a niche for itself in digital

media, software development, immersive training, and other high-tech fields that will increasingly offer rewarding and high-paying jobs to the local workforce. The impact of digital media on oil and gas, health care, and other industries is vital to these industries as it adds value to their services and products.

Some sectors have remained fairly consistent with their employment over the past 20 years. In 1985, nearly 20% of the U.S. workforce held manufacturing jobs, compared with less than 10% today. Employment in manufacturing, a wealth-creating industry, has remained steady in Lafayette, hovering between 6.4% and 7%, in spite of a large decline in U.S. manufacturing jobs as a whole.

Other sectors have seen significant changes, both increases and decreases, for various reasons. While the Services sector is still the top employing sector today, it is significantly lower than in 1985. This decrease can partially be attributed to the extraction of health care, leisure and information employment numbers. Retail employment is down almost 8% from 1985. This may be attributed to a more diversified economy. Individuals who typically work in retail—students, part-time workers and those with limited post-secondary education—have more employment options available to them in other industries today. Transportation has seen a drop in its share of Lafayette's total employment, which mirrors a decrease in Louisiana and U.S. transportation employment. On the contrary, employment in Finance, Insurance and Real Estate is up nearly 2% in Lafayette Parish, while it is down slightly in the state and nation.

Diversification of Lafayette's business base, and consequently our workforce, was the key to Lafayette's economic rebound and to the continued

continued on page 4

Employment by Industry

Industry	2008			1985		
	Lafayette	LA	U.S.	Lafayette	LA	U.S.
Services	16.0%	15.6%	19.4%	20.4%	20.1%	16.8%
Health Care	12.9%	11.4%	11.6%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Retail	11.5%	11.6%	11.0%	19.4%	18.3%	17.8%
Government	11.5%	18.9%	16.6%	13.3%	20.2%	16.8%
Mining	11.2%	2.7%	.59%	17.0%	5.1%	.95%
Leisure/Hospitality	9.8%	10.1%	9.8%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Manufacturing	6.8%	8.0%	9.7%	6.4%	11.2%	19.8%
F/I/RE*	6.1%	5.0%	5.9%	4.3%	5.3%	6.1%
Wholesale	4.8%	3.9%	4.8%	6.6%	5.8%	5.9%
Construction	4.6%	7.2%	5.3%	5.4%	6.6%	4.8%
Transportation	2.6%	4.2%	3.3%	7.4%	7.3%	5.4%
Information	2.3%	1.4%	2.2%	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: LA Workforce Commission, October 2008. 1985 data represents annual averages. *F/I/RE=Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.

LEDA Job Fair by the numbers

For 13 years, LEDA has hosted one of the largest and most eclectic job fairs in Acadiana. Employers can meet with more than 1,000 potential employees in a single day. Job seekers can meet with HR representatives from Lafayette's largest employing industry sectors— health care, oil and gas, manufacturing, retail and service— all in one place, all at one time. Training providers are also on site to inform job seekers and employers about their training and education opportunities. More employers participated in the 2008 LEDA Job Fair than in any other year. Plans are already underway for a bigger and better 2009 LEDA Job Fair.



above right: 500 job seekers came through the doors during the first hour.

above: Danielle Dayries presented three seminars to job seekers on writing a powerful résumé and following-up after the job fair.

below: Regent Broadcasting and Superior Energy Services were two of 96 employers at the LEDA Job Fair.



Job Seeker Demographics

Attendance- 1300

Employment Status

- 48% Currently Working
- 52% Unemployed

Highest Education Level

- 30% HS to HS Graduate
- 7% Associates Studies/Degree
- 12% Technical Studies/Degree
- 25% Some College
- 21% Bachelor's Degree
- 5% Advanced Degree

Parish of Residence

- 65% Lafayette Parish
- 5% Vermilion Parish
- 9% St. Martin Parish
- 4% Iberia Parish
- 6% St. Landry Parish
- 2% Evangeline Parish
- 5% Acadia Parish
- 1% St. Mary Parish
- 2% Other Areas in LA (including 1 out of state)

Employer Demographics

Employer Booths- 96

Top industries

- Retail and Service
- Health Care
- Oil and Gas
- Manufacturing

Business Location

- Lafayette 60 companies
- Acadiana 27 companies
- Other LA 9 companies

How would you rank the job seekers as potential employees?

- 96% Excellent/Very Good/Good
- 3% Fair
- 1% Poor

What is the likelihood of you hiring anyone that you interviewed at the Job Fair?

- 95% Excellent/Very Good/Good
- 2% Fair
- 3% Poor

How helpful was the Job Fair in your search for qualified applicants?

- 96% Excellent/Very Good/Good
- 2% Fair
- 2% Poor

"Very organized! Great Fair! First Rate! Best one I have participated in. Very Organized, KUDOS"
—MB Industries

"It was very helpful as far as finding good people needing employment."
—Premier Staffing



\$8 million in grants awarded

More Acadiana businesses received Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) grants for workforce training than any other area in the state. The Louisiana Department of Labor approved 75 contracts totaling \$8,814,431 for businesses in the region during the 2007-08 fiscal year.

“IWTP funds provide critical resources for area businesses,” says LEDA President and CEO Gregg Gothreaux. “IWTP investments help ensure that employers can get the training their employees need to increase their competitiveness and sustain economic growth.”

Funded by state unemployment insurance taxes, IWTP was created in 1997 by the Legislature to help employers around the state provide customized training for their workers. To qualify for the program, a business must have been in operation in Louisiana and contributing to the Louisiana unemployment tax system for at least three years and have at least 15 employees to be trained. Similarly, the Small Business Employee Training program provides standardized training for businesses with 50 or fewer employees.

Businesses interested in learning details about IWTP grants can contact LEDA’s Director of Workforce Development Ryan LaGrange at (337) 593-1405 or ryanl@lafayette.org.

Two businesses make Forbes top 10

Two Lafayette-based companies have been listed in the top 10 of *Forbes* magazine’s top 200 small businesses. PetroQuest Energy is ranked 6th and LHC Group is ranked 8th. This is the second consecutive year LHC has been in the top 10 and the first for PetroQuest Energy.

To qualify for the list, companies must be publicly traded, have sales between \$5 million and \$750 million and a stock price of \$5 per share as of September 29. The ranking is based on return on equity, sales growth and profit growth over the past 12 months and over five years. Stock performance in relation to industry peers is also reviewed.

“You expect larger metropolitan areas to have multiple businesses named to a list like this. Having two companies identified in the top 10 is reflective of Lafayette’s entrepreneurial spirit and success,” says Gregg Gothreaux, LEDA President and CEO.

Forbes reports that PetroQuest has increased in sales an average of 53% annually since it went public in 1999.

“To be recognized by *Forbes* is truly a honor,” says Charles T. Goodson, PetroQuest Energy Chairman, CEO and President. “In 2003 we made a strategic decision to diversify our existing Gulf Coast assets with long-lived resource plays. Being included in this list is a testament that we are successfully executing our balanced portfolio approach.”

LHC bought 30 home health companies in the last year and has 5,000 employees in 14 states, according to the magazine.

“It is a great privilege for our company to be included by *Forbes* in their ranking that recognizes excellence in both short- and long-term performance” says Keith Myers, LHC Group CEO. “We are especially honored to be ranked in the top 10 for the second straight year. We are very excited about our prospects as we work to expand our service network and continue to produce sound financial results.”

“Lafayette is the home of many world-class businesses, and we know that many of our best opportunities for attracting jobs and keeping our young people here come from home-grown businesses, says Joey Durel, City-Parish President. “We are very proud of PetroQuest and LHC Group for achieving this ranking and for all that they do in our community.”

Lafayette also has locations of four retailers named in the list: Jos. A. Bank (47), Buckle (52), Buffalo Wild Wings (67), and Hibbett Sporting Goods (119).

The complete list of America’s 200 Best Small Companies can be found at forbes.com.

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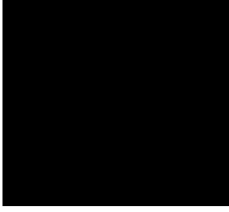
success we’ve experienced for the past decade. With Lafayette serving as the regional hub for health care, energy, professional services, retail, entertainment and post-secondary education; the downturn of any single industry and loss of workforce should not have as drastic an impact as it did

in the 1980s. As our business base evolves, with digital media, alternative energy and specialized medicine, new employment opportunities will present themselves to the local workforce, allowing for our graduates to stay in the area while attracting a new, highly-skilled workforce to Acadiana.

iLafayette.

Do you?

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Digital media workforce: A new force in training

The “wildcatter” mentality of our region has helped us to develop a strong reputation for innovative advancements, and Lafayette is directing its creative momentum toward becoming a nucleus for interactive technology. Lafayette’s unique technology package includes resources such as the Louisiana Immersive Technologies Enterprise (LITE), the University of Louisiana at Lafayette’s Center for Advanced Computer Studies (CACS), and the Fiber to the Premise initiative. Lafayette is emerging as a technology hub in Louisiana; and as a result, private industry has the ability to utilize public resources to differentiate themselves across vertical and horizontal markets. Enhancing research and development, fostering collaboration on the international stage, and providing high-speed data exchanges are several of the oft-mentioned benefits of Lafayette’s enticing technologies that are now coming to fruition. Now, a new series of benefits and market niches are presenting themselves, as these local resources are being employed for accelerated training of a new, highly-skilled workforce.

Specialized training programs are nothing new to the business community of Lafayette. In fact, over the past few years, our region has been one of the highest users of workforce training dollars in the nation; providing opportunities for skill enhancement and professional development to employees in hundreds of the region’s local companies. The following are a few examples of the most recent digital

ventures that are transforming our concepts of cost, safety and efficiency in public and private workforce training programs:

- **Energy** - The Lafayette Technical College is currently designing a state-of-the-art, virtual reality welder training program which will significantly lower costs for supplies

while creating skilled workers for one of the highest demand occupations in Acadiana.

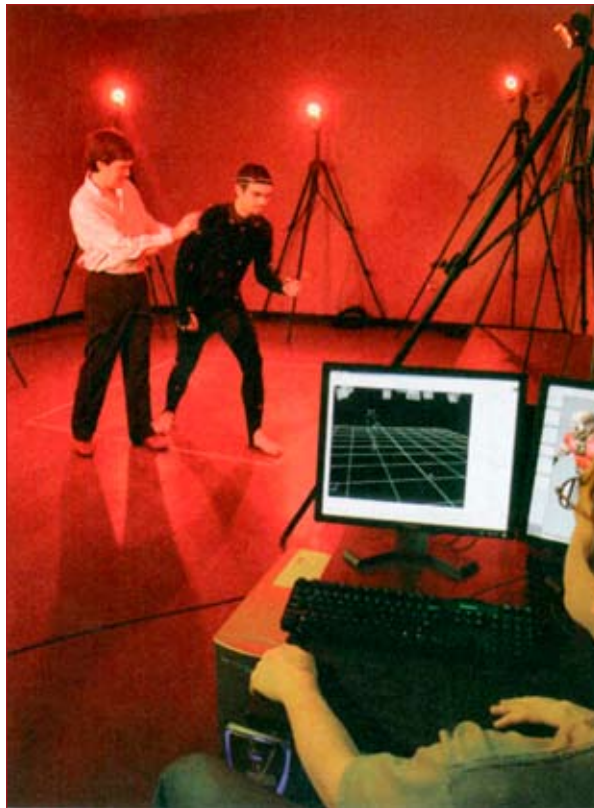
- **Health care** - UL Lafayette recently opened its Maternal/Child Life Skills laboratory. This is the only university in Louisiana that has a simulated neonatal, pediatric and labor delivery unit, where senior nursing students in the College of Nursing and Allied Health Professions use sophisticated computerized simulators that can mimic real-world hospital situations.

- **Aviation** – Lafayette is one of the largest hubs for privately-owned helicopter aircraft in the nation, supporting continued growth in the aviation industry. FlightSafety International is bringing more than \$100 million of interactive, motion-enhanced venues to Lafayette for training new and existing pilots from across the world.

Educators see that for industry to embrace these new technologies, programs need to be established locally to educate and train a creative, skilled workforce. For example, the Department of Computer Science offers one of the most advanced Video Game Design and Development curriculums in the nation and it is one of the most popular programs at the University. This curriculum offers students the ability to work in state-of-the-art lab environments while also requiring enrollment in traditional arts coursework (theatre, creative writing, visual arts and film production). This means the University is growing a qualified,

local workforce that is prepared to assist in the launch of new digital training applications, programs and venues.

Want to experience some of these training applications in action? Check out Techsploration: Lafayette’s Energy and Technology Showcase. Visit lafayette.org/techsploration for details.



The motion capture lab in UL Lafayette’s Center for Advanced Computer Studies is one of the many hands-on teaching tools for Lafayette’s digital media workforce.

Doug Burgess



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LEDA briefs

New Board of Commissioner appointments

Four new members were recently appointed to the LEDA Board of Commissioners. Commissioners are appointed by the City-Parish President, City-Parish Council, UL Lafayette President and the Area Mayors.

Mike Craton

was appointed to the LEDA Board by City-Parish President Joey Durel. Mike serves as a Vice President in the Employee Benefit division of Regions Insurance, Inc.



Mike Craton

“I look forward to working with our leaders as we move Lafayette Parish into the next chapter of our economic growth, in spite of the international and domestic recession,” says Mike. “We are indeed fortunate to have the leadership of Gregg Gothreaux at LEDA and Joey Durel at Lafayette Consolidated Government. They have steered our regional economy to one of greater diversification in areas such as technology, health care, while continuing to grow and support oil and gas exploration along with the service industry.”

David Strother was also appointed by Joey Durel and represents the Greater

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. David is a Certified Financial Planner and Accredited Investment Fiduciary Auditor. He is a Management Partner for DSF Wealth Management LLC in Lafayette.

“I am so pleased and honored with Mayor Durel’s appointment of me to the LEDA board. In my opinion this organization is the premier economic development group in our state. At this stage of my career it is a cherished honor to be able to play a role in LEDA’s future,” says David. “LEDA’s past efforts and successes have produced so much good for our community.



David Strother

I hope to play some small role in continuing positive contributions so that a few years from now LEDA will have accomplished more of its goals. I have had the opportunity of continually working with the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce since 1986 and I feel that my work with LEDA now completes a process for me.”

Additional new board members, **Chad Hanks** and **Susannah Malbreaux**, will be featured in the next LEDA Edge newsletter.

Employee highlight



Josephine Ennis

Josephine Ennis has joined the staff of LEDA as a Research Associate in the Information Services Department. She will work with clients to provide services such as market research, site selection, and industry analysis. She is also the LEDA representative for the City of Youngsville.

Josephine graduated from LSU with a degree in Political Science and spent a year studying at Thammasat University in Bangkok, Thailand. She was selected for Louisiana Public Allies, an AmeriCorps program, and served at the Urban Restoration Enhancement Corporation in Baton Rouge as a policy associate, event planner, and researcher. She also volunteered at an orphanage in Ghana, West Africa for six months prior to coming to LEDA.



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