

LOUISIANA DEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITIES PILOT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The **Louisiana Development Ready Communities Pilot Program** is moving forward and embracing LED's vision of making local communities **development-ready, competitive, and "open for business."** Continuing the momentum of the grassroots community development effort building in Louisiana since early 2007, Louisiana Economic Development (LED) launched LouisianaCommunityNetwork.com in 2008, to connect communities to resources and tools to use for best practice community and economic development strategic planning.

Now in 2009, LED's goal is to have **8 Pilot Communities** complete their own community and economic development plans, by early 2010, significantly enhancing their competitiveness. Why? LED is aggressively moving forward in its efforts to move Louisiana from good to great and it needs great competitive communities to cultivate and attract innovation and business development. The **Louisiana Development Ready Communities Pilot Program** is part of an evaluation process leading up to a statewide readiness plan that all of Louisiana's communities can choose to participate in.

Beginning in early August, **Pilot Community Applications** will be available for downloading through LouisianaCommunityNetwork.com and/or LMA's web site LMA.org. It's true, this is a lot of hard work, but...we're not going to just pile this on you and walk away....we're going to support you and provide the pilot communities with benefits unique to those selected:

1. Each Pilot Community will have a Resource Group assigned to it that have years of experience in community and economic development. Your community will receive on-going coaching and professional guidance during the pilot phase – especially with external assessment.
2. Each community will receive a Briefing Book and Roadmap that will clearly describe the process, resources and deliverables your community needs to develop.
3. We don't believe in wasting your time, so even the application process will bring your community to the point that you can get started even if not selected as a Pilot Community.
4. LED's Research Department will do all the data analysis necessary for your economic and demographic base analysis saving you hours and hours of looking for the most current data on your community
5. In order for your community to gather information from its businesses and leaders, ready to go online Business and/or Leadership Surveys will be available for your use with training/coaching on how to do a successful survey.
6. A **nationally recognized site selection expert** will visit your community as part of the community assessment process and will help you evaluate your sites and buildings as well as give you a chance to "test-drive" your sales pitch in a relaxed environment and get some valuable feedback.
7. A team from LED will visit your community and assist you with strategic planning by more fully familiarizing you with the state's Entertainment, Small Business, Business Retention and Expansion, Site Selection, Recruiting, and Incentive programs.
8. In the end, a publicized celebration of each Pilot Community's successes will be held to applaud and thank each community for their partnership both with LED and their private sector Investors.

Who is eligible to apply to be a Pilot Community?....Any municipality in Louisiana may apply. Your community may have completed these essential community and economic development processes before....however, they need to be updated on a regular basis. Your community might not have undertaken this challenge before and is worried about the commitment. There will be a system for choosing the pilot communities using a scorecard and an application process that will enable even those communities not selected to make significant progress toward beginning the best practice steps.

Pilot Communities will be selected by late-September and will have to agree to plan and implement the four essential **best practice** "development-ready" elements on a tight schedule:

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| 1. Kick-off Meeting | During week of October 6, 2009 |
| 2. Community Assessment | Completed by week of January 5, 2010 |
| 3. Strategic Planning | Completed by week of February 22, 2010 |
| 4. Leadership Development Plan | Completed by week of February 22, 2010 |
| 5. Marketing Your Community Plan | Completed by week of March 22, 2010 |

This is an aggressive pilot program requiring significant work and investment by LED and its partners in the Initiative. A Steering Committee of dedicated stakeholders has been continually working for the last two years and has devised a support methodology to see the Pilot Communities through to the completion of all of the steps. These valued partners include:

- AEP/SWEPCO
- Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives (ALEC)
- Entergy
- CLECO
- University of New Orleans
- Louisiana Municipal Association
- Police Jury Association of Louisiana
- LSU /SU Ext. Services.

For further information, please contact Skip Smart, LED Director of Community Development at 225.342.4321 or smart@la.gov.

