



SWLA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**ALLIANCE**

# 2020 Report



**CHAMBER**  
SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA



SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA  
**ALLIANCE**  
F O U N D A T I O N

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# KEEPING TRACK



George Swift  
President/CEO

As we gladly say goodbye to 2020, there are numerous reasons for having a positive outlook about the new year.

An Axios/Survey Monkey online poll finds that more than six in 10 Americans are hopeful about 2021. 76 percent were more hopeful than fearful about the pandemic in this year. 63 percent of respondents to the poll said they're more hopeful than fearful about what 2021 holds in store for the world. With the coronavirus vaccine becoming available, we can believe that by spring or summer there will be enough vaccinations given to bring this deadly pandemic under control. When that happens, larger gatherings and events can begin to take place and our economy will rebound, especially the restaurant, travel and entertainment sectors. In the meantime local health officials remind us that the best prevention against COVID is to wear a mask, conduct frequent handwashing and maintain social distancing.

Another reason for optimism is evident everywhere as our region rebuilds from two powerful hurricanes. Many homes and businesses have been repaired. Thousands more are in the process or have not begun due to various issues with insurance settlements, lack of contractors and lack of building materials and supplies. This recovery is going to take a long time. Debris is still everywhere.

McNeese State University and SOWELA Technical Community College have major rebuilding projects underway. That's a good sign that Southwest Louisiana is on the way back.

The Biden Administration is expected to push for another relief package. Despite our nation's political differences, and impacts of COVID-19 and hurricanes, there is still another reason for optimism. And that's the Pioneer Spirit of Southwest Louisiana. By working together, and doing what we do best, we can not only survive, we will thrive in 2021.

## FORGING ON

Building a portfolio of Certified Sites in Southwest Louisiana remains a priority for The Alliance. As with many other things, however, those efforts were disrupted or delayed due to the effects of COVID-19 and the impacts of Hurricanes Laura and Delta. No new certified sites were added in 2020, but the year concluded with great progress happening on some exciting potential sites.

Pending a rescheduled Calcasieu Parish Zoning Board hearing, which was repeatedly postponed during 2020, a site located at 4229 Houston River Road is expected to be the next site in Southwest Louisiana to achieve certification. All of the due diligence work and third-party reviews were completed during the year on this 51-acre site. Following the hearing, if the zoning is changed from agricultural to Industrial, the site will be officially certified by Louisiana Economic Development. That would bring the total number of LED-certified sites in Southwest Louisiana to 13.



Gus Fontenot

A bigger development for 2021 will be the continuation of work on the Calcasieu I-10 mega-site, a 12,000-acre site in western Calcasieu Parish along Interstate 10 between Sulphur and Vinton. Near the end of 2020, two sites totaling over 1,000 acres began undergoing the due diligence process. This was made possible through years of preliminary work involving the landowners, Louisiana Economic Development, and The Alliance.

Efforts continue across the five-parish area to identify sites that could qualify for certification. If the economy begins to stabilize and rebound in 2021, pursuit of the area's first Business Certified Site, for smaller non-industrial sites, will hopefully resume and become a reality.

# Chamber SWLA Board of Directors

## Officers/Executive Board

- Chair Jim Giffin of Edward Jones
- Chair Elect Kay Fox of Beauregard Electric
- Immediate Past Chair Kristy Armand of Healthy Image/Thrive Magazine
- Vice Chair, Governmental Affairs Ronnie Petree of The Bank
- Vice Chair, Business Dev. & Inclusion Thomas Clemons of Pridestaff Staffing
- Vice Chair, Education & Workforce Development Janie Fruge of West Calcasieu Cameron Hospital
- Vice Chair, Quality of Life Tobie Hodgkins of Century 21 Bessette Realty
- Treasurer Jason Guillory of McElroy, Quirk & Burch
- Legal Counsel Ross Raley of Stockwell Sievert Law Firm
- President/CEO George Swift of The Chamber SWLA/SWLA Alliance Foundation

The following Board members serve 1-year terms, set to expire on 12/31/2021

- Thomas Clemons of PrideStaff Staffing Agency
- Tee Doan-Robichaux of State Farm Insurance - Truc Doan-Robichaux
- Wendy Stine of Stine Inc.

The following Board members serve 3-year terms, set to expire on 12/31/2021

- John Berryhill of Image 360
- Jeff Favre of Isle of Capri Casino
- Jerry Dunn of CITGO
- Keith DuRousseau of Keiland Construction
- Greg Hennagin of The Golden Nugget
- Leon Lagneaux of Amerisafe
- Hal McMillin of Thompson Engineering
- Jolie Rhinehart of Phillips66
- Bart Yakupzack of Jack Lawton Companies
- Nic Zaver of Insignia Hotel Management

The following Board members serve 3-year terms, set to expire on 12/31/2022

- Kurt Allen of Air Liquide
- Ernie Broussard of The Colt Group
- Barry Brown of Red River Bank
- Kay Fox of Beauregard Electric
- Janie Fruge of West Calcasieu Cameron Hospital
- Margaret Harris of Entergy
- Debra Lastrapes of Calcasieu Refining
- Ronnie Petree of The Bank
- Roxie Smith of The MLK Coalition
- Greg Thibodeaux of Turner Industries

The following Board members serve 3-year terms, set to expire on 12/31/2023

- Junaid Abassi of Abassi Properties
- Eric Avery of Crying Eagle Brewing Company
- Domenick DiPaolo of Waste Management
- Gary Gobert of Lake City Trucking
- Hardtner Klumpp of The Investors Group of Louisiana
- Mark Peters of Lotte Chemical
- Tonya Richard of Imperial Health
- Harold Roland of L'Auberge Casino
- Scott Sirois of Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
- Eric Walker of SASOL

Designated Board Seats Representing Organizations

- Jenny Bono with Fusion Five
- Christina Joyce-Wilson with Leadership SWLA
- Tobie Hodgkins with Quality of Life Task Forces
- Devan Corbello with the Arts & Humanities Council of Southwest Louisiana
- Dr. Neil Aspinwall of SOWELA Technical Community College
- Dr. Daryl Burckel of McNeese State University

- Courtesy Seats
- Linda LeBlanc of Jeff Davis Chamber of Commerce
- Lillian Karr of DeQuincy Chamber of Commerce
- Lisa Adams of The Greater Beauregard Chamber of Commerce
- Lena McArthur of West Calcasieu Chamber of Commerce
- Jennifer Clinton of The Oakdale Chamber of Commerce
- Barbara Savant of Kinder Chamber of Commerce

# SWLA Alliance Foundation 2020 Board of Directors

## Officers/Executive Board

- Chair Jim Giffin of Edward Jones
- Chair Elect Kay Fox of Beaugard Electric
- Immediate Past Chair Kristy Armand of Healthy Image/Thrive Magazine
- Vice Chair, Governmental Affairs Ronnie Petree of The Bank
- Vice Chair, Business Dev. & Inclusion Thomas Clemons of Pridestaff Staffing
- Vice Chair, Education & Workforce Development Janie Fruge of West Calcasieu Cameron Hospital
- Vice Chair, Quality of Life Tobie Hodgkins of Century 21 Besette Realty
- Treasurer Jason Guillory of McElroy, Quirk & Burch
- Legal Counsel Ross Raley of Stockwell Sievert Law Firm
- President/CEO George Swift of The Chamber SWLA/SWLA Alliance Foundation

## Public Members

- Mayor Gene Paul, City of Oakdale (Allen Parish)
- Mayor Misty Clanton, City of DeRidder (Beaugard Parish)
- Mayor Mike Danahay, City of Sulphur (Calcasieu Parish)
- Katie Armentor, Cameron Parish Policy Jury Designee (Cameron Parish)
- Mayor Henry Guinn, City of Jennings (Jeff Davis Parish)
- TBA, Allen Parish Police Jury President/Designee (Allen Parish)
- Bryan McReynolds, Beaugard Parish Police Jury President/Designee (Beaugard Parish)
- Brian Abshire, Calcasieu Parish Police Jury Designee (Calcasieu Parish)
- Clair Marceaux, Cameron Parish Port (Cameron Parish)
- TBA, Jeff Davis Economic Development (Jeff Davis Parish)

## Private Members (Must have a minimum of one from each parish.)

- David Sickey, Coushatta Casino Resort (Allen Parish)
- John Nichols, First National Bank of DeRidder (Beaugard Parish)
- Glenn Pumpelly, Pumpelly Oil, Inc. (Calcasieu Parish)
- Stevie Trahan, Cameron LNG/Sempra (Cameron Parish)
- Mike Heinen, Jeff Davis Electric Co-op (Jeff Davis Parish)
- Butch Babineaux, C.H. Fenstermaker
- Ann Barilleaux, JD Bank
- Donald Brinkman, CSRS
- David Brossett, Brossett Achitect, LLC
- Ken Broussard, Broussard Group
- Michael Flatt, Northrop Grumman
- Dick Kennison, Kennison Forest Products
- Monica Miller, Alfred Miller Contracting Company
- Ryan Navarre, Billy Navarre Automotive
- Poncho Seaford, B1 Bank
- Ricky Self, Lake Charles Harbor & Terminal District
- Creed Romano, Entergy
- Bruce Kirkpatrick, Stream Companies
- Charles Timpa, First Federal Bank





**Public Support & Revenue**

Dues.....	\$675,000.00
Interest Income.....	\$2,400.00
SWLA Partnership & Grant Income...	\$42,400.00
Miscellaneous Income.....	\$5,600.00
	<u>\$725,400.00</u>

**Program & Publication Revenue**

Annual Banquet.....	\$75,000.00
Annual Golf Tournament.....	\$50,000.00
	<u>\$125,000.00</u>

**Project & Committee Revenue**

Business After Hours.....	\$3,000.00
SWLA Day at the Legislature.....	\$14,700.00
Women's Business Network.....	\$2,000.00
Impact Luncheons.....	\$2,000.00
SWLA PRO's Income.....	\$3,700.00
LegisGator Luncheon.....	\$100,000.00
Small Business EXPO.....	\$25,000.00
	<u>\$150,400.00</u>

Total Revenue: \$1,000,800.00

**General & Administrative Expense**

Audit & Accounting Fees.....	\$13,500.00
Bank Fees.....	\$15,000.00
Depreciation.....	\$672.00
Dues.....	\$12,000.00
Employee Benefits.....	\$52,000.00
Incentives & Commissions.....	\$40,000.00
Information Technology.....	\$6,500.00
Insurance (Liability & Workers).....	\$9,900.00
Miscellaneous Expense.....	\$0.00
Office Supplies & Expense.....	\$20,000.00
Payroll Taxes.....	\$48,000.00
Payroll Expense.....	\$2,880.00
Postage.....	\$10,800.00
Rent Expense.....	\$21,840.00
Salaries.....	\$400,000.00
Staff Training.....	\$6,000.00
Telephone.....	\$9,000.00
Travel & Registration.....	\$5,000.00
Vehicle Expense.....	\$12,000.00
	<u>\$685,092.00</u>

**Program & Publication Expense**

Annual Banquet.....	\$70,000.00
Annual Golf Tournament.....	\$20,000.00
Member Relations.....	\$12,000.00
Marketing & Membership Development.....	\$30,000.00
	<u>\$132,000.00</u>

**Project & Committee Expense**

Business After Hours.....	\$300.00
Build Our Bridge.....	\$30,000.00
SWLA Day at the Legislature.....	\$9,400.00
Executive Committee Expense.....	\$1,000.00
Board of Directors Expense.....	\$1,000.00
Public Policy Expense.....	\$80,000.00
LegisGator Expense.....	\$34,000.00
Small Business EXPO.....	\$9,300.00
Impact Luncheons.....	\$1,000.00
Project Expense.....	\$5,000.00
Women's Business Network.....	\$1,000.00
	<u>\$172,000.00</u>

Total Expense: \$989,092.00

**Net Operating Income (Loss): \$11,708.00**

# 2021 Budget

## **Public Support & Revenue**

Grant Income.....	\$30,000.00
Interest Income.....	\$240.00
SEED Center Rental Income.....	\$4,800.00
SEED Income.....	\$133,000.00
IMCAL Rental Income.....	\$30,000.00
SWLAPED Grant (Admin).....	\$110,000.00
<u>SWLAPED Grant (Economist).....</u>	<u>\$30,000.00</u>
	\$338,040.00

## **Project & Committee Revenue**

SWLA On the Move .....	\$750,000.00
Leadership SWLA.....	\$38,000.00
Miscellaneous Income.....	\$2,400.00
<u>Fusion Five.....</u>	<u>\$4,000.00</u>
	\$791,400.00

Total Revenue: \$1,129,440.00

## **General & Administrative Expense**

Audit & Accounting Fees.....	\$18,500.00
Bank Fees.....	\$2,040.00
Contract Labor.....	\$0.00
Depreciation.....	\$24,000.00
Dues.....	\$2,400.00
Employee Benefits.....	\$55,000.00
Incentives & Commissions.....	\$10,000.00
Information Technology.....	\$4,100.00
Insurance (BOD/Liability).....	\$5,000.00
Office Supplies & Expense.....	\$15,000.00
Payroll Taxes.....	\$26,300.00
Postage.....	\$1,200.00
Rent & Facility Expense.....	\$8,400.00
IMCAL Rent.....	\$13,500.00
Salaries.....	\$275,000.00
Staff Training.....	\$4,000.00
Telephone.....	\$6,000.00
Travel & Registration.....	\$4,000.00
<u>Vehicle Expense.....</u>	<u>\$6,000.00</u>
	\$480,440.00

## **Program & Publication Expense**

Marketing & Promotion.....	\$75,000.00
<u>Research Expense.....</u>	<u>\$5,000.00</u>
	\$80,000.00

## **Project & Committee Expense**

Economic Development.....	\$40,000.00
Regional Coalitions.....	\$10,000.00
MSU/Economist Expense.....	\$30,000.00
Retail Development.....	\$12,000.00
SEED Center Support.....	\$125,260.40
Business Incubator.....	\$177,000.00
Grant Expense.....	\$14,150.00
Investor Relations & Accountability.....	\$3,000.00
Workforce Development.....	\$82,676.28
Committee Expense.....	\$1,800.00
Board of Directors.....	\$1,000.00
Executive Committee.....	\$1,000.00
<u>Leadership.....</u>	<u>\$30,200.00</u>
	\$528,086.68

Total Expense: \$1,088,526.68

**Net Operating Income (Loss): \$40,913.32**

# 2021 Strategic Plan



**CHAMBER**  
SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA



**SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA**  
**ALLIANCE**  
F O U N D A T I O N

## Executive Statement

2021 is a year of challenges for Southwest Louisiana. It is a year of rebuilding after two hurricanes. It is a year of bringing Covid-19 under control with the availability of vaccines. The SWLA Economic Development Alliance is committed to leading business recovery, seeking workforce solutions for our employers, and working with existing industry, and recruiting new industry to our region.

There is much to be done and our resources are limited. Chamber SWLA Members and Investors in the SWLA Alliance Foundation are keeping our organization running at top speed as the most efficient chamber and economic development agency in the state.

When you put your dollars in the Alliance, you get a return on your investment with a better quality of life for all. We are working for a reduction in poverty, upgrading our workers to be able to afford home ownership, improving education for our residents, and creating a region of choice for our upcoming generations.

Thank you for your support.

George Swift  
President and CEO  
SWLA Economic Development Alliance/Chamber SWLA



# 2021 Alliance Foundation Strategic Plan

The SWLA Alliance Foundation is the only 501c3, non-profit agency in the Southwest Louisiana region devoted solely to the economic development of our region. With the support of its stakeholders, the SWLA Alliance Foundation enhances the economic footprint of Southwest Louisiana through strong regional partnerships, workforce development, business recruitment and retention, and entrepreneurship while striving for a culture of inclusivity. The mission of the SWLA Alliance Foundation is to promote and enhance the economic development and quality of life for the Southwest Louisiana region. Funds raised through the Alliance Foundation help our region through programs and projects focused on workforce development, economic development, and encouraging entrepreneurship. In addition, the funding allows us to better market our region for development.

Alliance Overall Brand Statement: Building a Better Southwest Louisiana

Foundation Brand Statement: Growing Economic Opportunity in Southwest Louisiana

Theme: We are a five-parish family...but one community strong.

Vision: Developing a true culture of reliance and innovation that leads to opportunity for all people in Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron and Jefferson Davis parishes. The agency will advocate for the rebuilding and nurturing of a 21st Century community that is resilient and adaptive to internal and external forces that can disrupt the day-to-day modes of social and economic successes that are already built on a culture of hard work and independence.

## **Objectives:**

***Facilitate Long Term Business Recovery Assistance:*** Small businesses across the nation are among the hardest hit by this pandemic (Covid19). Our regional business community has to manage the impacts of pandemic and natural disaster (two hurricanes). We will focus on industrial and commercial development.

- Analyze the needs of the regional business community.
- Partner with stakeholders to provide resources to the regional business community.
- Communicate news and successes related to recovery and traditional business development programming.

***Address Demand For and Usage of Big Data (Short Term Goal):*** All levels of business and governmental decision-makers utilize data to drive decisions. We live in an era of big data. Having findings, evaluations, and access to market data is a valuable asset to local governments, businesses, and individual community members. The Alliance Foundation will focus on building upon its data assets.

- Leverage the skills of the agency's in-house economist Dr. Dan Groft who is head of McNeese State University's H.C. Drew Center for Business and Economic Analysis.
- Utilize in-house software and data access in order to analyze trends and acquire business related intelligence.
- Investigate additional data assets and sources to fund.

**Provide a report on the needs and wellbeing of our regional business community.** Expand the current Business Expansion and Retention Group data gathering to include commercial economic drivers to complement the existing manufacturing economic drivers. Each visit to a business to discuss matters related to expansion and retention will be recorded in a separate spreadsheet for that business. The data collected will be used to synthesize a report on the needs and wellbeing of the SWLA Business Community without exposing any one or group of businesses.

**Workforce and Talent Development:** Assisting and promoting the development of the regional workforce is one of the primary objectives of the agency. The five-parish area's unemployment rate presents a challenge to our region. It also provides an opportunity for those workers to find new careers or maybe start a business in the SEED Center Business Incubator. Close-working relationships with McNeese State University, SOWELA Technical Community College, the five-parish school system, municipal and parish government, business community, local non-governmental organizations, community leaders will help to foster the development of educational courses that lead to degrees, diplomas, and industry-based certifications that can be leveraged in recruiting businesses to the region.

**Economic Development:** recruiting and business development continues to be a priority. The agency understands that the vitality of the overall community is based in a strong economy. Our region has experienced historic economic growth yet staff and stakeholders will work with increased intensity to address storm and pandemic recovery along with issues related to unemployment, poverty and ALICE (asset limited, income constrained, employed).

- Work with an industrial recruiting company partially funded by Entergy to target specific companies interested in locating, building, and hiring local talent.
- Maintain and develop certified industrial and commercial sites in our five parishes is key to growth.
- Expand business retention and expansion programming in order to strengthen the region's economic foundation.
- Make retention calls to existing businesses in order to maintain contact and provide assistance to current industries.
- Continue targeted retail business recruitment utilizing local, regional and national assets and consultants.
- Analyze and create plans to enhance current and develop new business sectors in the region...emphasis on TECHNOLOGY!

**Utilize Technology for Enhanced Communication and Gathering:** Technology offers many platforms to do outreach and communicate a message to our members and the larger business community. Using digital meeting places and social media platforms regularly to meet and communicate directly to the target audiences will be beneficial during the pandemic quarantine, and should be sustained and expanded after the pandemic subsides. To make this more user friendly, we need to train both our staff and our members how to access and effectively use these platforms.

- Reconstruct agency communications and social media plan.
- Develop and execute strategic communications plan for economic development and Chamber SWLA.

**Investor and Membership Development:** Seek support from Alliance Investors (Short-Term Goal) for an active economic development organization. To remain viable, we rely on Alliance Foundation investors. Without this support financial issues could render us ineffective. We will continue to demonstrate our value with more frequent contact. The agency will implement customer relationship management and targeted communications tools and policies to help strengthen our relationship with Foundation Stakeholders.



# 2021 Chamber SWLA Strategic Plan

The Chamber SWLA is a coalition of businesses and organizations working together to make Southwest Louisiana a better place to live and work. The Chamber is part of the SWLA Economic Development Alliance, an umbrella organization which works with private industry, the small business community and public entities to develop our region. The Chamber SWLA tailors every member to their specific and unique needs.

Alliance Overall Brand Statement: Building a Better Southwest Louisiana

Chamber Brand Statement: The Voice For Southwest Louisiana Business

Mission Statement: The Chamber SWLA is the voice of the Southwest Louisiana business community and promotes ongoing regional development to cultivate a higher quality of life for all citizens of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, and Jefferson Davis Parishes.

## Objectives:

- Outreach to Chamber SWLA Members to aid in their continuing recovery in relation to the previous Covid-19 shutdown and the two hurricanes that hit the region in 2020.
- Advocate for more emergency funding for the regional business community.
- Diversify and build upon our current membership base by sector, parish, and industry, while maintaining our retention rates
- Collaborate across industries and with government, civic agencies, educational institutions and community organizations to highlight the business case for diversity and inclusion
- Recruit a cross-section of members to share the praises and attributes of the region while expounding on their involvement with the Chamber SWLA (We are hoping to share the stories of a minimum of 10 members in this manner)
- Provide additional means of member exposure
  - Video Tours of their Facilities
  - E-newsletter Member Business Profiles
  - Reopening Events to celebrate the return to business for businesses affected by COVID and/or Hurricanes Laura & Delta
- Work with our federal delegation to include funding for a new Calcasieu River I-10 Bridge. We will continue to push LA DOT to move forward in the completion of the environmental impact study (EIS) and other documents.
- Advocate for technology development such as broadband in rural areas of our region.
- Utilize Technology for Enhanced Communication and Gathering.

Technology offers many platforms to do outreach and communicate a message to our members and the larger business community. Using digital meeting places and social media platforms regularly to meet and communicate directly to the target audiences will be beneficial during the pandemic quarantine, and should be sustained and expanded after the pandemic subsides. To make this more user friendly, we need to train both our staff and our members how to access and effectively use these platforms.

- Reconstruct agency communications and social media plan.
- Develop and execute strategic communications plan for economic development and Chamber SWLA.
- Encourage Chamber SWLA members and community to use digital meeting technology and make software upgrades that will enhance communications.
- Develop Policy initiatives that support Business/Quality of Life/Regional unity:
  - SWLA parishes of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, and Jeff Davis have worked together since the establishment of the SWLA Partnership for Economic Development in 2004. Today, it is more critical than ever to work together for the common good. The agency intends to tell the story of the region in order to let the international market know we are open for business and can meet development needs. No one city or parish can make it alone. Regional cooperation, even expanded with other regions such as Acadiana and Southeast Texas, will help our recovery and development.
  - Redistricting/Super Region -- In 2021, redistricting will be a hot topic and the Alliance/Chamber SWLA is leading local efforts to advocate for the five-parish area to remain in the current Congressional District. Our agency is engaged with our partners in Acadiana and monitoring developments.
  - Monitor legislative issues on state and federal levels
- Investor and Membership Development: Support from Chamber SWLA Members and Alliance Investors for an active economic development organization. To remain viable, we rely on Chamber members and Alliance Foundation investors. Without this support financial issues could render us ineffective. We will continue to demonstrate our value with more frequent contact. The agency will implement customer relationship management and targeted communications tools and policies to help strengthen our relationship with the Foundation and Chamber SWLA family.

***“You cannot manage what you cannot measure.” – Peter Drucker***

**Process/Methods:** For this Strategic Plan to be successfully managed, all goals and objectives contained in the plan must be written with a numeric output assigned. Any goal or objective that cannot be described by a numeric output will be removed from the Strategic Plan.

The Alliance staff will have an Excel Spreadsheet on the company share drive that contains each goal and objective and the primary person responsible managing each one. The spreadsheet will be designed so that each month, numeric data accomplished and pertinent notes, comments, or reflections will be populated by the responsible person. The staff will meet no less than monthly to review the progress reflected in the spreadsheet and discuss concerns and/or request assistance.

Data from the Strategic Plan tracking spreadsheet will be used to populate a dashboard. This dashboard will be accessible by staff, investors and members to see progress and celebrate accomplishments.

# Learning to Lead



Last year started off with a mixer and the Leadership Retreat, but then the rest of the year moved to online sessions. Graduates from this year's class will be allowed to audit future in-person sessions to gain some of the hands-on experience previous classes have enjoyed over the past 25+ years.



Last year's class attended sessions covering economic development, business, workforce development, human services, education, government, coastal restoration, & infrastructure.

***\*The 2021 Class started in mid-January with a socially distanced mixer and SIMSOC exercise at the SEED Center, but online sessions will continue until quarantine is over.***

## 2020 Class

- Robin Abshire, Alliance for Positive Growth
- Lauren Boring, City of Lake Charles
- Ben Bourgeois, Northwestern Mutual
- Crystal Briscoe, Sasol
- Malak Chabkoun, Calcasieu Parish Public Library
- Oliver Clark, JD Bank
- Mark Conner, Acadian Companies
- Colleen Desselle, CSE Federal Credit Union
- Domenick DiPaolo, Waste Management
- Nataliya Espey, First Federal Bank
- Ryan Fletcher, AMERISAFE
- Kelly Fontenot, Calcasieu Parish Police Jury
- Lydia Fruge, FNBD
- Athena Gieger, Family and Youth Counseling Agency
- Megan Goodly, Pelican State Credit Union
- Cody Heathcock, Westlake Chemical
- Derek Hoffman, Stockwell Sievert Law Firm
- Patrick Laley, Phillips 66
- Amy Miller, Cheniere Energy
- Colten Miller, Visit Lake Charles
- Allyson Montgomery, The Children's Museum of Southwest Louisiana
- Reginald Nash, Calcasieu Parish Public Library
- Crystal Ortego, CITGO
- Caleb Prince, Calcasieu Parish Assessor's Office
- Krickett Racca, Fusion Five/Crying Eagle
- Dillan Rainwater, B1 Bank
- Simon Randolph, Golden Nugget Lake Charles
- Tyler Richard, IBERIABANK
- Jessica Stewart, Junior League of Lake Charles, Inc/Choices
- Alex Stinchcomb, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Louisiana
- Lesley Warren, Red River Bank

# The 2020 Timeline

- January 30, 2020: Annual Banquet
- February 20, 2020: JD Bank Hosts Business After Hours
- March 13, 2020: Calcasieu Parish Schools Close
- March 16, 2020: Alliance Office Moves to staggerd shifts and work from home positions
- March 26, 2020: EXPO Cancelled
- April 2, 2020: Business Pitch Postponed
- May 12, 2020: Southwest Day at Capital Cancelled
- August 2020: 15th Annual LegisGator Postponed
- August 13, 2020: Business Pitch Held
- August 27, 2020: Hurricane Laura Hits
- October 5, 2020: Full Staff Returns to Office Under COVID rules
- October 9, 2020: Hurricane Delta Hits
- October 14, 2020: Full Staff Returns to Office - Again
- October 23, 2020: Chamber SWLA Golf Tournament Cancelled
- September 23, 2020: Alliance Business Recovery Center Opens
- November 19, 2020: LegisGator Held Online
- November 30, 2020: Calcasieu Parish Schools Return to Campus Full Time





# BY THE NUMBERS

Shared  
221  
E-newsletters

Hosted  
12  
Webinars

Filmed  
12  
Virtual Tours

Sent out  
12  
Surveys

Distributed  
Over 30,000  
Masks

Reached Out to  
100% of our  
Chamber SWLA  
membership\*



Helped  
over 950  
Businesses

The Chamber SWLA/SWLA Economic Development Alliance along with McNeese's Small Business Development Center and representatives from the Small Business Administration helped over 950 businesses. Housed at The SEED Center, Business Recovery Center (BRC) also provided access to the internet and extra computers for businesses that needed assistance filling out online forms for funds through the Small Business Administration and LED. Due to COVID-19, all businesses had to make appointments and masks, sanitizer and plenty of space was provided. To celebrate the opening of the BRC, Senator Bill Cassidy, MD, visited The SEED Center on September 28, 2020.

\*Due to communications issues, we were not able to get in touch with a small percentage of our membership.

# CREATING A PATHWAY - PART ONE

Made possible by a \$150,000 seed grant from the Sempra Energy Foundation, the Alliance distributed 50 Pathway to Small Business Recovery grants in order to provide immediate cash assistance to struggling small businesses. The grant was for businesses with less than 25 employees in Calcasieu & Cameron Parishes. (See collage to see pictures of recipients) The 2nd Round of Donations is taking place at this time with funds donated by The Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana

"The purpose of this program is to help hurricane impacted businesses have some quick funding, so they can get back in business", said George Swift, President/CEO of the Alliance. "We are very appreciative that the Sempra Energy Foundation and Cameron LNG realize that these struggling businesses need help," continued Swift.

"Our hearts are with everyone impacted by the recent hurricanes in the Gulf Coast area and we're proud to support Alliance SWLA's program to help small businesses as they work to recover and rebuild," said Lisa Alexander, president of the Sempra Energy Foundation. "We are committed to strengthening the communities where we operate and this program will do just that by supporting the people of Southwest Louisiana." Sempra LNG is the majority owner of Cameron LNG, a liquefaction facility located just outside of Hackberry straddling the boundary between Calcasieu and Cameron Parish.

According to Swift, Cameron LNG also stepped up to support the Alliance's administration of the grant program with a separate donation. Stevie Trahan, Cameron LNG External Affairs Manager, said "Cameron LNG is proud to join with our partner and its Foundation, to support this vital initiative to help the SWLA Alliance support small business recovery."



Michelle McInnis, SWLA Alliance Director of Major Events & Workforce Development; Swift; Anya McInnis of Cameron LNG and Kelly Prasser, Senior Manager of External Affairs at Sempra Energy



George Swift; Stevie Trahan, Cameron LNG External Affairs Manager; Anya McInnis of Cameron LNG, and Michelle McInnis.

## COMPETING WITH CONTINGENCIES

On August 13, 2020, the SEED Center hosted the 8th Annual Business Pitch competition utilizing the entire 2nd floor of the SEED Center and masks to host a social-distanced, Covid-mindful event. This year's winners (by division) were awarded \$5000 and in-kind counseling in accounting and marketing.

- High School: Austin Dellafosse, Foods Can Heal      College: Moochee
- Technology: Wildlife Conservation      General Business: Dietitians at Home

Judges at the event were Edwina Medearis of Medearis Costumes, Gifts & Balloons, and Tux Plus; Gary Gobert of Lake City Trucking; and Peter O'Carroll of O'Carroll Group. The Title Sponsor was Sasol, Presenting Sponsor was Capital One Bank, and other sponsors were Lake Charles Coca-Cola, The O'Carroll Group, McNeese Foundation, and J. Walker & Company.



**sasol**







Creed Romano, Entergy Project Manager - Southwest Louisiana; Michelle McInnis, SWLA Alliance Foundation Workforce Director; George Swift, Chamber SWLA & Foundation President & CEO; Gus Fontenot, Economic Development Project Coordinator; and Perry Pertuit, Entergy New Business Development.



Matt Grover, Executive Vice President of Altice Business Services; George Swift, President/CEO of the Alliance; and Hakim Boubazine, President of Telecommunications & COO of Altice.



Harold Rowland, L'Auberge's Vice President- General Manager; Sarah Camp, L'Auberge's Community Relations Partner; George Swift, Alliance's President & CEO; Jackie St. Romain, L'Auberge's Vice President of HR; and Michelle McInnis, Alliance Foundation Development.



Katie Chiasson, Sr. Business Developer with CLECO; R.B. Smith, Alliance VP, Business & Workforce Development; and George Swift, the Alliance's President & CEO.



Michelle McInnis, Tammy Waters, TC Energy's Mid-America Associate; George Swift, the Alliance's President & CEO; and Jimmy Courville, ANR Pipeline Mid-America Team Lead (Lafayette Area)

# Alliance Investors

- Acadian Ambulance Service
- Alfred Miller Contracting Company
- Alfred Palma, LLC
- AMERISAFE, Inc.
- B1 Bank
- Barksdale Credit Union
- Beauregard Electric Co-Op Inc.
- Beauregard Parish Police Jury
- Bechtel
- Billy Navarre Group
- Brossett Architect, LLC
- Broussard Group
- Calcasieu Parish Police Jury
- Cameron Communications
- Cameron LNG
- Cameron Parish Police Jury
- Cameron Parish Port, Harbor & Terminal
- Capital One
- CenterPoint Energy
- Century 21-Bessette Realty
- Champeaux, Evans, Hotard
- Cheniere Energy, Inc.
- Chennault International Airport Authority
- CHRISTUS Ochsner Health System
- C.H. Fenstermaker
- CITGO Petroleum Corporation
- City of DeQuincy
- City of DeRidder
- City of Lake Charles
- City of Oakdale
- City of Westlake
- CLECO
- Community Foundation of SWLA
- Coushatta Casino Resort
- CSE Federal Credit Union
- CSRS, Inc.
- Delta Downs Racetrack Casino & Hotel
- Enbridge
- Entergy
- First Federal Bank of Louisiana
- First National Bank of Louisiana
- FNBD
- Freshko Food Service, Inc.
- Fusion Five
- Georgia Pacific
- Golden Nugget Lake Charles
- Hancock Whitney
- Healthy Image
- IBERIABANK/First Horizon
- Indorama Ventures
- Isle of Capri Casino Hotel
- JD Bank
- Jeff Davis Economic Development
- Jeff Davis Electric Cooperative
- Jefferson Chamber
- John H. Carter
- Kaough & Jones Electric Company
- Keiland Construction
- Kennison Forest Products
- Lake Charles Coca-Cola Bottling Company
- Lake Charles Memorial Health System
- Lake Charles Regional Airport
- Lake Charles Toyota
- Lake City Trucking
- L'Auberge Casino Resort
- Laundry World
- Lotte Chemicals
- Louisiana Radio Communications
- Magnolia LNG
- McDonald's
- McElroy, Quirk & Burch
- Merchants & Farmers Bank
- Mermentau Harbor & Terminal District
- Northrop Grumman
- Pedestal Bank
- Phillips 66
- Port of Lake Charles
- Port of Vinton
- PPG Industries
- Production Hook-up Service
- Pumpelly
- R & H Refractory Services
- Rau Financial Group, LLC
- ReCon Management Services
- Sabine State Bank
- Safety Council of SWLA
- Sasol North America
- Sempra Energy Foundation
- Sempra LNG
- Scalisi, Myers & White (APC)
- Southland Environmental
- Southwest Beverage Company
- Southwest Louisiana Credit Union
- Stine, Inc.
- Stockwell, Sievert, Viccellio, Clements & Shaddock. LLP
- Stream Family
- Suddenlink
- Tellurian, Inc.
- The Bank
- Town of Vinton
- Turner Industries
- Union Pacific
- Venture Global LNG, Inc.
- Weeks Marine
- West Calcasieu Cameron Hospital
- West Calcasieu Port



Southwest Louisiana produces energy for the nation and provides chemicals and plastics for hundreds of products worldwide. We supply aircraft with maintenance, repair, and custom interiors, and we propagate agriculture and timber. Plus, we are a destination with world-class casino resorts and golf.

# RESILIENCE...

## THAT'S SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA

When we get hit hard by weather, we respond quickly to get up and running. The Port of Lake Charles, Chennault Airpark, and Lake Charles Regional Airport are open and ready for your business.

Our Southwest region has over 12 certified industrial sites ready for your company.

*To hear the Southwest Louisiana Resilience Update give us a call.*



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