

ECONOMIC INNOVATION INTERNATIONAL, INC.

85 NEWBURY STREET, THIRD FLOOR
617-424-0990
BOSTON, MA 02116
617-424-0999
EMAIL: info@economic-innovation.com

TEL:

FAX:

**FINDING THE HIGH COMMON
GROUND
VOLUME II**

**STRATEGIC ACTION PLATFORM
FOR NORTHWEST LOUISIANA**

FINAL REPORT

**ECONOMIC INNOVATION INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMICS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES**

September 9, 2003

Copyright © 2003 Economic Innovation International, Inc.

ECONOMIC INNOVATION INTERNATIONAL, INC.

Economic Innovation International is a management-consulting firm internationally recognized for building market-based economic development funds and creating policy reforms that change the fundamental structure of an economy. These funds and policy reforms generate wealth and high quality jobs for residents of low-moderate income communities within the United States and abroad. The firm is a leader in designing innovative development solutions that respond to market forces and have a long-term economic impact beyond business cycles or electoral terms.

Local communities and regional economies, like nations, live in a world of constant change, increasing competition, and economic and cultural dynamism. Every day, local markets are affected by the complex interactions of international, interregional, and intra-regional markets. Economic Innovation helps communities design and implement realistic action plans that increase their current comparative advantage and strengthen the community's underlying human, financial, and technological resources. Economic Innovation's primary goal with each client is to help build smart communities, smart enterprises, and smart workers who can compete in today's global technological economy.

Since 1971, the firm has helped build private-public partnerships that have created more than \$50 billion of strategic development resources in North America, Europe and the Pacific Rim. The firm has provided development assistance in more than 37 states and 21 countries, and is currently under contract in such diverse locations as the San Francisco Bay Area, San Diego and Sacramento, California; Portland, Oregon; St. Louis, Missouri; Boston, Massachusetts; and Palestine.

Belden Daniels, founder and President of Economic Innovation, is an attorney and former international banker who taught economic development and development finance for many years at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute for Technology (MIT).

ECONOMICS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

Economics Research Associates (ERA) is an international development and urban planning economics consulting firm founded in 1958. ERA has its headquarters in Los Angeles, California, and offices in Chicago, San Francisco, San Diego, Washington, D.C., New York, Dallas, and London. ERA has worked in every state and approximately 40 foreign countries. In domestic and international projects, ERA has completed more than 14,500 research and consulting assignments for both public and private clients. Fusing talents of a multi-disciplined staff, the firm's experience is concentrated in five interrelated fields: (1) economic development and planning; (2) real estate and land use; (3) recreation, tourism, and leisure time; (4) transportation systems; and (5) management and marketing services.

In urban and regional economics, ERA has conducted major studies for public and private clients in most major metropolitan areas. These have included economic development

strategies, real estate analysis services, urban redevelopment feasibility assessments, long-range master plans, fiscal and economic impact studies, tourism and recreation plans, public facility feasibility studies, community development, transportation-related development strategies, and urban planning policy analysis. Approximately 60 percent of ERA's clients are private sector organizations and 40 percent are public sector agencies.

LSUS CENTER FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH (CBER)

In undertaking this Northwest Louisiana Strategic Action Plan, Economic Innovation and ERA have found a valuable colleague in Susan Beal, Director of the LSUS Center for Business and Economic Research. The Center is an economic development initiative that provides essential business and economic research on the Shreveport-Bossier Core Statistical area. The Center provides a database of economic indicators for the region, applied research for local chambers of commerce, local and state governmental units and business and industry to promote economic growth in Northwest Louisiana.

Economic Innovation and ERA are deeply appreciative of this collaboration with LSUS/CBER, which has immeasurably contributed to the accuracy of this analysis. Nevertheless, Economic Innovation and ERA take full responsibility for the analysis and conclusions of this report.

The presence of the LSUS Center for Business and Economic Research is an important ongoing resource to contribute to the long-term implementation of this Strategic Action Plan and the benchmarks, performance measures and performance audits proposed in this report.

TWO NATIONAL CONSULTANTS

Roger Coleman of Coleman Associates and Richard Baron of McCormack, Baron and Salazar contributed significantly to the analysis and proposed strategic actions in the healthcare sector and neighborhood community redevelopment, respectively.

NORTHWEST LOUISIANA STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN INVESTORS

The Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce, Bossier Chamber of Commerce, LSU/Shreveport Foundation, United Way of Northwest Louisiana, Minden-South Webster Chamber of Commerce, Committee of One Hundred, and Northwest Louisiana Partnership for Economic Development have provided both the intellectual and financial capital necessary to ensure the success of this undertaking. This has been an interactive and collaborative relationship in which leadership from investors and many other organizations in the Shreveport-Bossier City MSA and surrounding parishes have provided constant input, feedback and continuous improvement. The leadership of each of these investor institutions is found in Appendix 4.

OF SPECIAL NOTE

Many individuals invested substantial personal time to make this Analysis and Action Plan more complete and accurate. Those who require special note beyond the investors include: Reggie Abrams, Lisa Babin, Richard Baron, John B. Beard, Stacey Brown, Roger Coleman, Zazell Dudley, Nancy Dugas, James "Jim" K. Elrod, Lydia Jackson, Theron

Jackson, Eva Klein, Lola May, Rev. Clifford McClain, Chancellor John McDonald, Joe Miciotto, Dr. Phillip Rozeman, John F. "Jack" Sharp, Diana Simek, Ann Stokes, Mary Ann Tice, Patti Trudell and Art Walker. Many others also gave unstintingly of their time, experience and judgment. Over 200 individual contacts and interviews are found in Appendix 5.

Table of Contents

General Limiting Conditions	vi
1.0 Summary of Strategic Action: Volume II	7

General Limiting Conditions

Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the data contained in this study reflect the most accurate and timely information possible, and these data are believed to be reliable. This study is based on estimates, assumptions and other information reviewed and evaluated by Economic Innovation International and Economics Research Associates from their consultations with the client and the client's representatives and within their general knowledge of the economy and industries. No responsibility is assumed for inaccuracies in reporting by the client, the client's agent and representatives or any other data source used in preparing or presenting this study.

This report is based on information that was current as of March 2003 or as noted in the report, and Economic Innovation International and Economics Research Associates have not undertaken any update of its research effort since such date.

Neither Economic Innovation International nor Economics Research Associates makes any warranty or representation that any of the projected values or results contained in this study will actually be achieved.

Possession of this study does not carry with it the right of publication thereof or to use the name of "Economic Innovation International" or "Economics Research Associates" in any manner without first obtaining the prior written consent of Economic Innovation International and Economics Research Associates. No abstracting, excerpting or summarization of this study may be made without first obtaining the prior written consent of Economic Innovation International and Economics Research Associates. This report is not to be used in conjunction with any public or private offering of securities or other similar purpose where it may be relied upon to any degree by any person other than the client without first obtaining the prior written consent of Economic Innovation International and Economics Research Associates. This study may not be used for purposes other than that for which it is prepared or for which prior written consent has first been obtained from Economic Innovation International and Economics Research Associates.

This study is qualified in its entirety by, and should be considered in light of, these limitations, conditions and considerations.

1.0 Summary of Strategic Action: Volume II

The challenge of this Platform for Strategic Action, Volume II, is to build upon the region's Strengths, correct its Weaknesses, realize its Opportunities, and address potential Threats described in the Strategic Analysis, Volume I.

For each Strategic Action recommended below, we summarize the Analysis described in Volume I; the Actions proposed in Volume II; and the Next Steps to be undertaken now.

These Strategic Actions for building a healthy community and a productive region can only succeed if all parties make a firm commitment to work together collectively toward the same vision and mission, to achieve the same goals on the same high common ground in accordance with the highest current national standards for best practice, and then widely report performance outcomes to the media and to business, civic and governmental organizations throughout Northwest Louisiana.

Section 2.0—Building Healthy Communities

The Analysis:

The differences between rich and poor, and between most blacks and most whites in the Shreveport-Bossier City metropolitan area, are too great, and pose too great a risk to the long term health of the region in today's highly competitive global economy. The gap will continue to widen rapidly, if not attended to in a fundamental new way. The collective leadership and citizenry of the whole Shreveport-Bossier community must be engaged *now* in finding the "High Common Ground" to address this growing gulf (Volume I, Section 4.3, Community Needs Analysis).

Community development and social services have grown significantly in Northwest Louisiana over the past decade, but, however unintentionally, they are generally provided in their own silos, just like other spheres of activity in the region. As many leaders among providers recognize, these services suffer from lack of community wide goal setting, integrated planning, mutually targeted fund raising, performance audit, and public accountability to a single index of community wellness (Volume I, Section 4.3, Community Resource Inventory).

A broad range of commercial banking and other financial activities, and a number of public-sector city and state loan programs for the renovation and construction of affordable housing, day care and neighborhood health centers, and small, minority-owned and women-owned business are described in Volume I, Section 5.3, Financial Capital. Yet complaints are persistent that these resources do not pay off in meaningful action in low-and moderate-income neighborhoods. In addition, there are reliable reports that banks and not-for-profits have had to turn back substantial financial resources previously committed to accomplish these purposes because there were not appropriate vehicles to manage the capital.

There are many good reasons for these apparent anomalies (Volume I, Section 4.4.9, Community Banking and Financial Services). The most important is the absence of an appropriate umbrella not-for-profit and for-profit financial and management intermediary that can serve as an acceptable broker between private commercial banks, CAPCOs and BIDCOs; Federal, State and Municipal programs; and emerging neighborhood organizations to build trust among key players, package deals and oversee the implementation of those deals according to current national best practice for low income community investment. There are also no skilled advocacy and oversight organizations in place to measure and monitor performance by regulated financial institutions, like the national model described in Volume II, Appendix 5.

The Action:

The Vision and Mission is to create opportunity where there is now despair, to create independent jobs and wealth where there is now dependence; create individual, family and community health where there is now disease, to transform terrible economic and social costs (now borne most heavily by the poor, but also placing a hidden tax on the wealthy) into productive market opportunities for all, and to generate hope and prosperity where anger and violence now reside.

The principal Strategic Action proposed to carry out this Vision and Mission is the creation of a not-for-profit Shreveport-Bossier Comprehensive Community Development Corporation (Shreveport-Bossier Comprehensive CDC, Volume II, Section 2.5.1) and a nationally recognized affiliate for-profit New Markets Tax Credit Fund (The Affiliate Fund, Volume II, Section 2.5.2). This self-sufficient not-for-profit umbrella corporation and its for-profit affiliate will have the capacity to:

- Create mixed-use commercial, industrial and affordable housing development, school and after-school facilities, day-care facilities, and other physical infrastructure for healthy and productive inner-city neighborhoods.
- Make all critical decisions with regard to the employment of for-profit, not-for-profit and public-sector resources necessary to implement strategic actions. The result will be an integrated set of resources and mechanisms capable of one-stop financing for mixed-use commercial, industrial and affordable housing development, as well as support services in low income neighborhoods.
- In collaboration with the “Common Ground” Northwest Louisiana Regional Development Corporation (Volume II, Section 6.0) and the LSUS Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER), institute a system for monitoring and reporting the performance of the not-for-profit Comprehensive CDC and its for-profit affiliate Fund in producing “Double Bottom Line” outcomes: (1) financial returns to investors and (2) measurable job and wealth social equity returns to low-income residents of target neighborhoods, based on the Bay Area Family of Funds model described in Volume II, Appendix 4, and the overviews in Appendix 9.9999
- In collaboration with the “Common Ground” Northwest Louisiana Regional Development Corporation (Volume II, Section 6.0) and CBER, establish benchmarks and performance goals for monitoring the Community Reinvestment performance of Northwest Louisiana financial institutions, based on the San Diego Capital Collaborative model described in Volume II, Appendix 5.

Structure the not-for-profit Shreveport-Bossier Comprehensive CDC so that its primary task is the physical redevelopment of the low income neighborhoods of Shreveport-Bossier City, and so that it also has an oversight and coordinating function with regard to the following Strategic Actions:

- Support the Committee of 100’s development of the Coordinated Transportation/Day Care Program, which will enable entry-level workers to reach their jobs at earlier and later times of the day and on weekends, and have safe, healthy places for their children to receive care (Volume II, Section 2.0).
- Support the private-sector leadership group in creating the “All Industry Procurement Program” to Create New Minority Enterprise that builds on the existing Barksdale-Shreveport Chamber Procurement Program, possibly in partnership with the Manufacturing Managers’ Council. This integrated procurement program will create business opportunities for minority firms providing goods and services to the healthcare, gaming and tourism

industries, core manufacturing and Tier One suppliers, and state and federal institutional buyers (Volume II, Section 4.3).

- Support the #70 and #71 Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to create employment opportunities for talented youth within the region so they do not leave for employment opportunities elsewhere (Volume II, Section 5.2).
- Support the three principal Health Care Centers participating in a new voluntary umbrella health care organization modeled after CERT in developing a concerted mission and strategy to address the poor health of so many residents of low-income neighborhoods of Shreveport and Bossier City (Volume II, Section 3.1).
- Support the community development and social service providers of Northwest Louisiana as they develop a more integrated delivery of community development and social services, designed to avoid duplication, fill commonly identified gaps, and report on outcomes and continuous incremental improvement.
- Work with the LSUS Institute for Human Services and Public Policy (IHSP) and its affiliated Red River Academy for Social Entrepreneurism to establish sound management practices for the Comprehensive CDC, and support the Academy in assisting not-for-profit neighborhood organizations to develop sound management so they are good partners in developing neighborhood projects with the comprehensive CDC (Volume II, Section 5.3.3).
- Work with the “Common Ground” Northwest Louisiana Regional Development Corporation (Volume II, Section 6.0) and the LSUS Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER), to institute a system for monitoring and reporting the performance of each of these initiatives so that they create an integrated whole which improves the job and wealth creation and quality of life in the target low-income neighborhoods.

Each of these initiatives converts high social costs into productive market opportunities that measurably benefit individuals, families, low-income neighborhoods and the entire Northwest Region.

Next Steps:

The success of the Shreveport-Bossier Comprehensive CDC and its Affiliate Fund is contingent on attracting the highest quality board and management as described in Volume II, Section 2.5.

- ✓ Highly regarded, independent blacks and whites must come together in a small, effective, working board to create a CDC that meets the highest national standards for best community investment practice.
- ✓ They must choose a nationally regarded fund management team that will attract national investors to Shreveport.

Otherwise, the concept of the Shreveport-Bossier Comprehensive CDC will fail, and an even greater gulf will be created in Shreveport-Bossier than now exists.

The first order of business in the implementation of the Shreveport-Bossier Comprehensive CDC is the recruitment, selection and engagement of the most highly regarded, responsible and independent blacks and whites in the region to come together as a small board of directors (seven to eleven) to act as the collective, confidential group willing to bring the Comprehensive CDC into life and action, and address community issues facing Shreveport, Bossier City and the region.

A six-month trial period is needed to assess whether all parties are committed to the same high common ground and working in accordance with the highest national standards for best practice.

Section 3.0— Action: Strengthening the Existing Economic Base

The Shreveport-Bossier City MSA has the most balanced economic base of any metropolitan area of its size in North America. This economic base includes a dynamic healthcare industry, a growing tourism, recreation and gaming cluster, a strong manufacturing core and key suppliers, and an important global military base.

The old rule of thumb, “If it isn’t broken don’t fix it,” is replaced by the new dictum, “If you are ahead of the game today, you have to run even harder to stay ahead of the competition tomorrow.” The key to success in today’s global economic competition is to know one’s strengths and build on them for the future. This Platform for Strategic Action proposes strengthening healthcare (Volume II, Section 3.I), strengthening tourism and recreation (Volume II, Sections 3.2. and 3.3) and building more affordable retirement communities (Volume II, Section 3.4).

Section 3.1—Strengthening Healthcare

The Analysis:

Healthcare is a vital industry and a key factor in both the regional and national economy, but it faces many dangers. As is true with many elements of Northwest Louisiana’s economic base and political economy, the region’s three principal healthcare centers operate within silos, wasting energy competing aggressively against each other, instead of working collaboratively to build the region into an even more important major health center serving a broader service area and better meeting the acute healthcare needs of low-income residents in the region.

Northwest Louisiana must confront a disturbing reality: Despite the resources of the three major medical centers and their substantial individual contributions to low-income neighborhoods, the health of the 40% minority population in Caddo and Bossier Parishes is generally poorer than that of blacks in the rest of Louisiana, and substantially poorer than that of blacks in the nation as a whole. If these three institutions were to act in concert in accordance with national best practices, and if the results were measured and reported, the outcomes might be significantly changed.

The Action:

One solution is to encourage the institutions to jointly engage a healthcare consultant from outside the region to help identify the most pressing health care issues of the underserved in our community. Working with the consultant, the three health care centers could identify high priority needs in low income neighborhoods, aggressively seek grant funding, and develop a Strategic Plan to engage local institutions in helping to address these needs on a targeted basis. This assistance could be in the form of leadership from their staff, skilled resources, financial aid, and administrative support. This collaborative project could also include developing the community scorecard for health related improvements for the next 5-10 years.

A model for this collaboration is the Northwest Louisiana Coalition for the Health of Women and Children (the infant and perinatal mortality project). LSUHSC-S OB-GYN physician Dr. Steve London headed an effort to get a grant for multi-year funding of an initiative in low-income areas to address infant mortality. The grant provided funding for hiring skilled staff and administrators. Willis-Knighton and CHRISTUS Schumpert have provided meeting space for the voluntary board, and each has contributed resources and advisory personnel as well as mobile exam centers to carry health care to the neighborhoods. Additionally, United Way has provided rent-free office space to the Coalition for the Health of Women and Children for the life of the project.

The proposed collaborative Strategic Action to address the problem of poor healthcare in low-income neighborhoods would initially create a positive environment, establishing a template for further

September 9, 2003

cooperative effort by the three leading health care centers. This would also directly benefit all three health care institutions over time—improving overall health profiles and thereby lowering the cost of providing charity care. Individually, the chief executives of the healthcare centers have indicated their openness to this idea.

Based on initial success in this collaborative venture, the consultant might then assist these healthcare institutions to find common ground, agree on common goals, and consider ways to maximize the individual comparative advantages of each healthcare center to grow a collective tertiary and quaternary regional healthcare capacity. Such a collective healthcare capacity would be more comprehensive and more wide-reaching than that of any individual institution acting alone.

Next Steps:

Two highly regarded national healthcare strategic planners have recently been engaged in addressing healthcare planning and management issues in Northwest Louisiana: Eva Klein of Eva Klein Associates prepared the original Strategic Action Plan for the Biomedical Research Foundation, and has recently concluded a similar Strategic Plan for the LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport. Roger Coleman of Coleman Associates provided strategic input for this Strategic Action Platform with regard to the healthcare industry in Northwest Louisiana. Both have generated considerable confidence within the professional leadership of the health care centers in Northwest Louisiana. Either or both might be engaged to facilitate these recommendations. CERT is a working model in the region. Eva Klein served as the consultant to the Biomedical Research Foundation and the private and public universities in the region in the original design and implementation of CERT, so she would bring an understanding of CERT and healthcare in the region to this task.

Section 3.2—Strengthening Tourism and Recreation

The Analysis:

Tourism, Recreation and Gaming have emerged over the last decade as a major industry in the region. The five riverboat casinos and associated hotels employ approximately 8,500 persons, making this the third largest regional economic base industry after healthcare and manufacturing. In addition, the region historically has attracted outdoors enthusiasts. The introduction of a Bass Pro Shop at the planned Riverwalk in Bossier City will reinforce the outdoor recreational dimension of Northwest Louisiana's Tourism and Recreation cluster. Finally, Shreveport has a rich musical tradition, which is celebrated in the Red River District and is the motivation for FAME's proposals to recapture and redevelop that heritage.

Tourism is a good industry to have as part of a region's economic base, as it imports income and capital from outside the region, employs low-and semi-skilled people who otherwise would have difficulty finding jobs, generates opportunities for small local suppliers, and provides tax revenue for local jurisdictions. Because wages are relatively low, however, and career ladders are relatively short, tourism must be seen as only one component of Northwest Louisiana's diversified regional economy. In the context of Northwest Louisiana's already diversified economy, expanding the tourism industry in Northwest Louisiana is a good thing.

The Action:

Shreveport-Bossier City has an opportunity to build on the extraordinary growth of Gaming and Tourism in the last decade, to expand the stay and diversify the offerings, particularly by taking advantage of the remarkable assets of the Red River shared by the two cities.

The Convention and Visitor's Bureau recognizes the need to diversify and has prepared a Tourism Marketing Plan, which calls for diversifying feeder markets, increasing visitor length-of-stay and average

party-size, recruiting additional conventions and trade shows (detailed in Strategic Actions, Volume II, Section 3.2.4).

The task now is sharp focus on implementation, and careful post-audit and public reporting of outcomes against measurable goals to ensure that scarce resources are effectively targeted.

Next Steps:

The Convention & Visitor's Bureau is organized to implement its marketing plan, and should be recognized as the coordinating and marketing entity for the region, working with other groups that provide recreation, such as the casinos, outdoor sports organizations, FAME, cultural and music venues, and participating public funding jurisdictions. This important regional role is separate from the planned Shreveport Convention Center management and marketing, which will be performed under contract by a separate organization, SMG.

The benchmarks in Volume II, Section 3.2.8. are suggested as a guide to the Convention & Visitor's Bureau in its role as the regional coordinating and marketing organization. They should be developed in partnership with the lead investors and with the technical support of the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER). Agreed upon benchmarks should then be measured annually by CBER and reported publicly by the Convention & Visitors Bureau and the "Common Ground" Northwest Louisiana Regional Development Corporation (described in Volume II, Section 6.0).

Section 3.3—Developing the Red River Heart of the Region

The Analysis:

The core of the region's tourism is Downtown Shreveport and the Bossier City waterfront. Both cities are implementing development in these areas to build upon the tourism base. The Red River is "the Heart of the Region" but it is an underutilized asset of great potential economic, cultural and recreational vitality. Today, the river is a dividing line between municipal histories, identities, attitudes and memories. A strong regional core is not only important for tourism, it also is important for developing a strong regional identity for the region's residents and for external markets, and for facilitating regional planning.

The Action:

The Red River Heart of the Region initiative could have two initial strategic components:

The first Strategic Action, already in motion as evidenced by discussions between Bossier City's Louisiana Riverwalk representatives and Shreveport Downtown Development Authority (DDA) officials and riverfront stakeholders, is a marketing collaboration that spans the Red River. Clearly, a cooperative marketing effort undertaken by the attractions flanking the river in downtown Shreveport and on the Bossier riverfront will create an "in-town" identity for the region and leverage advertising dollars to create more marketing impressions both inside and outside the region.

The second Strategic Action could be a concentrated effort by leaders of both sides of the river to identify issues of common concern and need. Examples of common interest might include:

- ✓ Adding a lock and dam on the Red River to the north;
- ✓ "Hard edging" more of the urban sections of river on both sides;
- ✓ Creating additional public recreational amenities on both sides; and
- ✓ Establishing a transit link, such as a ski-lift-style gondola or a jitney between the two entertainment districts.

These objectives would be accelerated if championed by a Shreveport-Bossier coalition focused on making the Red River truly the heart of the region.

Next Steps:

We recommend that a task force composed of the two cities, DDA, Convention and Tourist Bureau, and major riverfront developers be created to coordinate planning and development efforts and to establish a *Red River Heart of the Region Plan* as detailed in Volume II, Section 3.3.3 and 3.3.4, below. Key to the success of this effort would be a memorandum of understanding between the cities to designating the region as a joint development effort and pledging a commitment to support the plan.

Section 3.4—Building Affordable Retirement Communities

The Analysis:

The high quality of life, the relatively low cost of living, the abundant recreational activities and the high quality medical services in Northwest Louisiana combine to make the region a natural, attractive retirement community. This has been demonstrated by the substantial number of Barksdale military personnel who have chosen to return to the region at the end of their military service (Volume I, Section 3.6).

Affordable retirement communities in the region could be substantially expanded, especially in smaller cities such as Minden and in more rural towns and parishes, if there were a concerted regional strategy to support the development of these communities.

Potentially important to this Strategy are the nearly 30,000 undeveloped acres on the federal reservations of Barksdale (Volume I, Section 3.6) and the former Army Ammunition property in Webster Parish (Volume I, Section 3.6), where public policy efforts might be beneficial in opening up long-term development sites for retirement communities focused on retired military personnel.

The new State of Louisiana's Retirement Development Commission and its Livable Louisiana Retirement Ready Community (LLRRC) program can be of real help to this regional initiative. The Commission awards the LLRRC Seal of Approval to cities and regions that demonstrate to the Commission that they are premier locations for retirees. The Commission has established an application process and evaluation criteria for this program.

Minden has completed a specific market feasibility study with the technical support of the LSUS Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) to identify potential sites with local developers who specialize in master planned retirement communities.

The Action:

This Strategic Action Platform should support the City of Minden's effort to build a pilot Affordable Housing Community, as detailed below in Volume II, Section 3.4.3. It should then support the development of a regional strategy that could be applied in similar smaller cities and towns. Specific Actions include:

- ✓ Evaluating the specific feasibility of developing a cluster of retirement communities in the Minden vicinity;
- ✓ Evaluating the specific feasibility of developing a cluster of retirement communities elsewhere in the region; and
- ✓ If such developments are feasible,
 - preparing land use policies that facilitate retirement community development in specified locations, and

- preparing a marketing strategy for attracting targeted seniors.

Benchmarks should then be established for each of these goals, performance monitored, and performance outcomes widely reported to the media and to business, civic and governmental organizations throughout Northwest Louisiana.

Next Steps:

This Strategic Action Platform should endorse and support Minden's application for "Livable Louisiana Retirement Ready Community (LLRRC)" Seal of Approval, and then support Minden's program as the model for a concerted regional strategy.

Section 4.0 —Creating a New Economic Base

Despite the diversity in Northwest Louisiana's economic base, that base is wide but not deep; it is missing a vibrant, current culture to generate, manage and expand new enterprise, which is the distinguishing characteristic of the most dynamic regional economies in the nation and world today (Volume I, Section 3.0).

There are three dimensions to this proposed Strategic Action:

- ✓ Creating New Enterprise in order to build a new economic base (Volume II, Section 4.1);
- ✓ Creating New Biomedical and Biotechnology Enterprise in order to realize the full potential of the Biomedical Research Foundation and the most dynamic sector of the economic base, healthcare (Volume II, Section 4.2); and, finally, and most importantly,
- ✓ Creating New Minority Enterprise in order to generate true equal opportunity among blacks and whites (Volume II, Section 4.3).

Section 4.1—Creating New Enterprise

The Analysis:

If Shreveport-Bossier City is to thrive in the global-technology-driven economy of the 21st Century, the region must have the ability to generate and expand not only new enterprise but also entirely new economic sectors. As products and services in the region's economic base mature, production of these products and services will almost certainly move elsewhere, especially as world capital markets do an even better job of shifting investment from one country and economy to another.

The Northwest Louisiana region has the individual wealth necessary to support this key economic development engine, and it has a past history of new enterprise development beyond oil and gas, including the creation of mature firms such as Beird Industries and Frymaster and emerging firms such as Fibrebond, CELLXion and Sound Fighter Systems. Today, however, significant local family wealth is deployed in venture capital in other sections of this country and the world rather than being reinvested in the region (Volume I, Section 3.9).

The Action:

The first Strategic Action of this Platform is to equip promising enterprises with access to sharply focused financial and management resources necessary to grow profitably and to create higher quality jobs and wealth in the region, including:

- ✓ Entrepreneurial training at the region's high schools and universities, and for entrepreneurs at the proposed LSUS Center for Entrepreneurial Development and Leadership (CEDL, Volume II, Sections 4.1 and 5.3) and at the planned Frost School of Business Family-Owned Business Center at Centenary College (Volume I, Sections 3.7.4);

- ✓ Creating a Capital Access Program;
- ✓ Encouraging mentorship provided by the local SCORE chapter, as well as other high quality management assistance that is focused and publicly accountable to post-audit;
- ✓ Integrating the All Industry Procurement Program (Volume II, Section 4.3) into this Entrepreneurial Development Initiative; and
- ✓ Establishing benchmarks for each of these goals, performance monitored, and performance outcomes widely reported to the media and to business, civic and governmental organizations throughout Northwest Louisiana.

These Strategic Actions to Invest in Entrepreneurial Development are outlined below in Volume II, Section 4.1.2. These Strategic Actions should not be simply implemented by a group of suppliers from the colleges and universities, small business development centers and incubators. These Actions must be demander driven by successful entrepreneurs and sophisticated local investors who insure that the suppliers are focused on market-based outcomes, are rewarded for successful performance, and publicly accountable to post-audit. This will lead to the kind of results-oriented management assistance tied to financial resources that Creates a New Enterprise culture that generates “gazelles” and can truly compete in the 21st Century technology economy.

The second Strategic Action of this Platform is to create the conditions within which it is prudent for a portion of the considerable family wealth of Northwest Louisiana to be reinvested in the region. To meet this standard, the available seed and early stage venture and mezzanine capital investment opportunities in the region must be as well managed as, and produce risk-adjusted rates of return approximately equal to, the risk capital investment options currently available in other parts of the country. If these conditions are met, local investors have indicated their interest in supporting high quality young firms created in Northwest Louisiana by both majority and minority entrepreneurs. These conditions are outlined below in Volume II, Section 4.1.3, Investment in High Risk Enterprise.

Next Steps:

A small working group of successful individual investors of family wealth in high risk venture capital, key representatives of the proposed LSUS Center for Entrepreneurial Development and Leadership (CEDL) and the planned Centenary College Frost School of Business Family-Owned Business Center (as these two new entrepreneurship centers become operational), business incubators, small business development centers, and other important regional service suppliers should be convened by the investors to develop an implementation strategy that is tough-minded, market-oriented, highly focused and accountable to a public performance audit of measurable outcomes.

An entrepreneurial development consortium, the New Enterprise Consortium, should then be developed which brings these private, not-for-profit and public-sector partners together in an organization modeled after CERT. It is essential to the success of this New Enterprise Consortium that sophisticated, local private sector investors and successful local private sector entrepreneurs have a majority on a small board made up of roughly half investor/users and half suppliers in order, as we have noted, to ensure that the implementation of this Strategic Action meets current national best practice requirements.

Section 4.2—Creating New Biomedical and Biotechnology Enterprise

The Analysis:

The Biomedical Research Foundation was an important innovation of the 1985 Strategic Action Plan. However, the Strategic Analysis found that the Foundation could be operated in a more focused, more efficient and more effective manner to carry out its missions (Volume I, Section 3.3.8).

September 9, 2003

Based on an intense mutual review of current national best practice for creating new biomedical and biotechnology enterprise, a review undertaken jointly by the senior board and management of the Foundation and the Strategic Planning Team, the Foundation has agreed to adopt the best practices as described in Volume II, Section 4.2.

The Action:

The Foundation defines for itself a complementary, two-fold mission:

Mission I: To enhance the research, teaching and clinical capacity of LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport:

Strategic Actions with regard to enhancing LSUHSC-S should be mutually reviewed and agreed to annually by the leadership and management of the Foundation and the Health Sciences Center and publicly reported annually (Volume II, Section 4.2.2). For example, scarce resources such as the \$3 million annual rental income paid by LSUHSC-S to the Foundation for Biomedical Research Institute should be reinvested in a highly focused, strategic way, mutually agreed to by the Foundation and the Medical Center, in order to leverage substantial additional resources for LSUHSC-S. The highest returns generally come from investment in the human capital of professional research and teaching faculty, not physical plant or new technologies. An initial investment in high quality research and teaching faculty will, in turn, leverage the necessary physical and technical assets for these high-impact people.

Provision should be made for public accountability by the Foundation to the LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport, the healthcare community, and the citizens of the region for meeting these goals (described in Volume II, Section 4.2.2.7).

Mission II: To establish Northwest Louisiana as a nationally recognized regional technology center through the creation of InterTech Science Park.

High-promise, high-risk investments in seed and early stage technology companies, especially biotechnology and biomedical instrument companies, are best structured in independent limited liability companies (LLCs) or limited partnerships in order to isolate the risk and insure that investment managers are rewarded or penalized for success or failure (Volume II, Section 4.2.3).

- ✓ Investment returns must be appropriate to risk—that is, Series A seed rounds are expected to produce Series A returns, Series B rounds to produce Series B returns. Early seed rounds are generally made in very small increments, in partnership with large numbers of sophisticated national and local angel investors.
- ✓ Return must be appropriate to risk irrespective of the instrument used to represent the risk (e.g., direct equity investment; purchase of specialized equipment; custom-building unique, sophisticated facilities, or unsecured, non-guaranteed loans).
- ✓ National investors with world class reputations in biotechnology and biomedical device investments are expected to be substantial co-investors in each and every investment in order to validate the risk-adjusted rate-of-return and the soundness of the technology. Any exception to this rule courts disaster.
- ✓ Rigorous due diligence by national life science investors—not regional consultants—is essential to validate any high promise/high risk investment. If an enterprise is worth investing in, national capital providers will come; if it is not, they will not.
- ✓ High risk investment asset valuations can only be validated by a neutral third party external to the deal. Until this external evaluation occurs, investments have no reliable value. These

investments are carried at book until an external evaluation, made by a nationally regarded sophisticated investor, either increases or decreases their value.

- ✓ World class attracts world class. In biomedical and biotech commercialization, anything less leads to failure.

An annual audit of performance, made public, creates a strong bond of public trust. We recommend that the Biomedical Research Foundation Board and the “Common Ground” Northwest Louisiana Regional Development Corporation collaborate to arrive at a mutually agreeable set of performance measures and public reporting guidelines to create this public trust, as described in Volume II, Section 4.2.3.7.

Next Steps:

The decisions by the senior board and management of the Biomedical Research Foundation to adopt current national best practice for creating new biomedical and biotechnology enterprise should be formally recognized, adopted and reported by the full board of the Biomedical Research Foundation.

Draft performance measures are suggested below in Volume II, Section 4.2.2.7 and Section 4.2.3.7, as a guide to the Biomedical Research Foundation Board who, in partnership with the Lead Investors and the “Common Ground” Northwest Louisiana Regional Development Corporation, and with the technical support of the CBER, are encouraged to monitor outcomes resulting from the implementation of these Strategic Actions. Performance according to these benchmarks should then be measured annually by CBER and reported publicly by the Biomedical Research Foundation Board to the media and to business, civic and governmental organizations throughout Shreveport, Caddo Parish and Northwest Louisiana.

Section 4.3—Creating New Minority Enterprise

The Analysis:

To build a productive region in Northwest Louisiana that provides genuine equal opportunity to blacks and whites, minority entrepreneurs need access to real markets more than to loans or training. The best way to provide access to markets is through a targeted procurement of goods and services by large established economic-base firms from qualified minority entrepreneurs. Minority entrepreneurs also need access to risk capital on an equitable basis as described in Volume II, Section 4.1.

The Action:

The goal of this Minority Enterprise Strategic Action Platform is to expand upon the successful 20-year track record of the Barksdale/Shreveport Chamber procurement program by creating an All-Industry Procurement Program, which will engage all of the economic base industries of the region—healthcare, manufacturing, tourism and gaming—as well as educational institutions at all levels and state and local governmental institutions, to generate the procurement of quality goods and services by major economic base firms from well-supported minority entrepreneurs.

These difficult and complex tasks can only be successful if they are implemented according to the highest current national best practices. For procurement programs to be successful in growing minority enterprise, there is a single best practice that must be adhered to; there can be no double standards with regard to managerial competence, quality and price of goods and services, or timeliness of delivery. Firms with high potential must be actively mentored and provided with appropriate management and financial support to achieve their goals. Anything less than high integrity, energy and commitment from the entrepreneurs and the enterprise will not flourish.

The key Strategic Actions for this All Industry Procurement Program are:

- ✓ Model the program after the successful procurement program begun in 1985 and continuing to the present, between the Shreveport Chamber and Barksdale Air Base;

- ✓ Encourage the major local base industries—including healthcare, manufacturing, tourism and entertainment—to participate actively in this program;
- ✓ Encourage local majority enterprise to be the “venture sponsor” generating new minority enterprise by doing an internal review for services and outsourcing them where there currently are no minority owned enterprises. The Shreveport, Bossier and Minden Chambers of Commerce could be encouraged to set goals for their members to pursue this effort – a Chamber “Fair Share” Initiative;
- ✓ Encourage state, parish and municipal governments, and K-12 and higher education institutions to participate in the initiative;
- ✓ Integrate this All Industry Procurement Program into the Entrepreneurial Development Initiative, Volume II, Section 4.1;
- ✓ Encourage wealthy individuals who are sophisticated investors in venture capital nationally to participate. Some of these investors have indicated that they might be willing to assume somewhat greater risk and receive a somewhat slower rate of return if the opportunity is investment in the growth of minority enterprise with a reasonable prospect of success (Volume I, Section 5.3.4);
- ✓ Monitor community reinvestment based on the national model found in Volume II, Appendix 5;
- ✓ Establish benchmarks for each of these goals, monitor performance and widely report performance outcomes to the media and to business, civic and governmental organizations throughout Northwest Louisiana.

The All Industry Procurement Program would have its own board, which would coordinate the regional effort. The Manufacturing Managers Council should be asked to participate.

Next Steps:

A small group of champions from the minority community, the Manufacturing Managers Council, each of the economic base industries, and the Shreveport Chamber Procurement staff should convene to plan and structure this important initiative.

Section 5.0—Investing in Lifelong Learning

Volume I, Section 4.1, The Role of Human Capital in the Intelligence Age, underlines the primary importance of education at every level in creating and sustaining the knowledge base essential for a thriving modern economy.

Volume II, Section 5.0, describes Strategic Action to increase investment in lifelong learning from Kindergarten through Grade 12 (Volume II, Section 5.1), Workforce Education and Training (Volume II, Section 5. 2) and Higher Education (Volume II, Section 5.3).

Section 5.1—Investing in K-12

The Analysis:

Excellence in education is essential to a competitive 21st Century economy. Yet a majority of primary and secondary schools in both Shreveport and Bossier are academically below average compared to other schools in Louisiana. Moreover, primary and secondary education does not equally serve both the black and white communities in Shreveport-Bossier City. Far fewer blacks graduate from high school than whites in both parishes, and far more whites have two-year, four-year or graduate college degrees than blacks (Volume I, Section 4.4.1).

September 9, 2003

In 2000, the not-for-profit Alliance for Education was established by a group of community leaders who believed that public education is the responsibility of both educators and the community as a whole. The Alliance worked with the education system to develop a series of projects to promote improvement and innovation in the school system, in school buildings, and in classrooms.

The Alliance also hosts the Caddo Citizen Education Taskforce, which is specially focused on improving the learning environment for the children of Caddo Parish. This subgroup is providing a needs assessment to the community by visiting every school in the parish, surveying over 3000 educators and parents, and holding community forums for input.

On July 1, 2003, Ollie S. Tyler became the new Superintendent of the Caddo Parish Schools, and on August 4, 2003, she presented a new "School Choice" Plan to the Parish School Board. Superintendent Tyler had embraced the work of the Alliance and the Caddo Citizen Education Taskforce when she previously served in the Caddo school system, and this relationship is expected to deepen with her return.

The Action:

The Alliance for Education's work over the past two years has led to the following proposed Strategic Actions:

- ✓ Develop a broader public understanding of and participation in public education. Focus on what all stakeholders together can do to educate all children well.
- ✓ Build community capacity to succeed in state and federal school improvement initiatives as outlined by the state "LEAP for the 21st Century" and the federal "No Child Left Behind" Act.
- ✓ Assign the highest priority in school improvement to leadership development of principals and teachers. Have a highly qualified teacher in each classroom.
- ✓ Work on a global school improvement model for Northwest Louisiana, based on collaboration, choice, and entrepreneurship. Work to increase incentives for school performance, school capabilities, and freedom of action at each school site.
- ✓ Provide every child the skills essential to employability.
- ✓ Provide effective early childhood education for all children, with initial emphasis on development of this resource in low-income areas.
- ✓ Establish benchmarks for each of these goals, monitor performance and widely report performance outcomes to the media and to business, civic and governmental organizations throughout Northwest Louisiana.

Next Steps:

The Caddo, Bossier, Webster and DeSoto School Superintendents and the Alliance for Education will be meeting to review this Platform for Strategic Action to develop a common course of action.

Section 5.2—Investing in Workforce Education and Training

The Analysis:

No economic region can succeed in the 21st Century without smart workers in smart firms. A strategic investment in Workforce Education and Training is essential to the success of the region and to the success of this Strategic Action Platform (Volume I, Section 4.1).

The Community Needs Analysis in Volume I, Section 4.3, shows a precipitous decline in the youngest workforce age group (18-34) in the region over the last decade. This is a grave concern deserving of a major concerted initiative in this Strategic Action Platform—a concentrated effort to create good jobs for

young people and to provide them with the education and training to secure these jobs (Volume I, Section 4.3.2).

Workforce Education and Training is now being given increased emphasis in the state and region, but efforts are still uncoordinated and not fully responsive to either employer or worker needs (Volume I, Section 4.4.2). There exists no single mechanism to coordinate the needs of employers and the skills and training needs of workers, and hold trainer/suppliers accountable to employers and workers for training to fill urgently needed jobs (Volume I, Section 4.4.2).

The Action:

Employers who generate jobs that need to be filled, workforce suppliers who train workers for jobs, and workers who need jobs and skills must work together in a “workforce consortium” to create a regional workforce capable of responding to current market needs and to the emerging opportunities of a knowledge-based economy. Nothing less will ensure a resilient, diversified economy and economic opportunity for all citizens.

This will require a single, concerted effort that will bring the three groups together around a simple idea—*train workers for jobs businesses need to fill*. The Workforce Consortium should represent:

- ✓ employers large and small with jobs to fill and training needs to be met,
- ✓ workforce education/training suppliers, including the two separate Workforce Investment Boards (WIB #70, serving the ten-parish region of Northwest Louisiana and WIB #71 serving the City of Shreveport), the community and technical colleges, and the two separate Tech Prep consortia serving Northwest Louisiana, and
- ✓ representatives of workers who need jobs and skills.

This new Workforce Consortium can be patterned on the most comprehensive current operating model, Enterprise Florida’s Workforce Florida, Inc. Workforce Florida, Inc.’s Board is composed of the three leadership groups listed above; it oversees three Workforce Councils, one of which—“High Skills/High Wages”—aligns Florida’s education and training programs with higher-paying, high-demand jobs that reward educator/trainers who graduate workers to these fill jobs (for details, see Volume II, Appendix 7. It is important to note that Louisiana does manage a similar Louisiana Occupational Forecasting Conference staffed by the Louisiana Workforce Commission and the Louisiana Department of Labor. Details are found in Volume I, Section 4.4.2).

The Workforce Consortium would establish benchmarks for each of the Strategic Actions described in detail in Volume II, Section 5.2.4, in partnership with the Lead Investors and the “Common Ground” Northwest Louisiana Regional Development Corporation, and with the technical support of CBER. Then, with CBER, it would monitor performance and report performance outcomes to the media and to business, civic and governmental organizations throughout Northwest Louisiana.

Next Steps:

The Shreveport Chamber of Commerce has recognized the importance of workforce education and training by establishing a volunteer Vice Chair for Workforce Development, charged with developing a Strategic Action Plan for this area. This officer, Ann Stokes, who also sits on the Louisiana Workforce Commission, could convene and help facilitate a working group of employers, educator/trainers and worker representatives to design the implementation of the Strategic Action proposed here.

Section 5.3—Investing in Higher Education

Higher education is an essential investment in a knowledge-based economy. An investment in high-quality higher education is therefore an *essential* investment in the success of this Strategic Action Platform.

5.3.2 Consortium for Education, Research and Technology (CERT)

The Analysis:

The Consortium for Education, Research and Technology of North Louisiana (CERT) is an important vehicle for improving the coordination and performance of private and public higher education in the region—especially as it relates to regional economic development—and a potential model for other regional collaborations, as long as its strengths and weaknesses date are understood and addressed.

The strength of CERT is its essential success in bringing together a very diverse group of higher education institutions that, in other regions of the country, do not have a history of working well together, if at all. CERT performed the heavy lifting of helping to rationalize the many separate public and private, four-and two-year colleges and universities of North Louisiana into a coherent system in which the comparative advantages of each could be recognized and enhanced.

CERT’s weaknesses are: (1) It does not yet have independent, long term funding; (2) it functions more as a loose confederation than a strong federation; and (3) it is not currently publicly accountable for achieving measurable goals. These weaknesses can be corrected with better funding, and should be as it is asked to take on additional roles (Volume I, Section 3.7.1).

The Action:

Beyond its role as an active intermediary between and among its 12 member institutions, CERT should expand its role as a facilitator of joint ventures between its member institutions and leaders of business and industry to carry out key elements of this Strategic Action Platform, especially Expanding Entrepreneurship and Creating A New Economic Base, Volume II, Section 4.0.

Once CERT’s current weaknesses are addressed, it is a potential model for a number of new consortia that should emerge as a part of this Platform. These potential new consortia include:

- ✓ Creating the Shreveport-Bossier Comprehensive Community Development Corporation (Volume II, Section 2.0);
- ✓ Strengthening Healthcare through a common approach to improving low-income health (Volume II, Section 3.1);
- ✓ Developing The “Red River Heart of the Region” Coalition (Volume II, Section 3.3);
- ✓ Creating a New Enterprise Consortium for Enterpreneurial Development (Volume II, Section 4.1);
- ✓ Creating an All Industry Procurement Program to help support profitable, growing Minority Enterprise (Volume II, Section 4.3);
- ✓ Creating a New Workforce Consortium to bring together employer/demanders, trainer/suppliers and workers to invest in Workforce Education and Training (Volume II, Section 5.2), and finally, and most importantly
- ✓ Building the “Common Ground” Regional Development Corporation to integrate and oversee the performance-based implementation of all of these initiatives, monitor performance and report on outcomes (Volume II, Section 6.0).

Strengthening CERT with appropriate, long term, sustained funding and support so that it can play a larger role in the implementation of this Strategic Action Platform is, thus, an important goal of this Plan.

Next Steps:

CERT Board leadership, in partnership with the lead investors of this Platform, can best determine the precise amount of necessary sustained funding. More important than the precise \$ amount is the concept of more sustained reliability than is provided by uncertain annual grants from the State.

Performance measures can be developed in partnership with the Lead Investors and the “Common Ground” Northwest Louisiana Regional Development Corporation, and with the technical support of CBER. These benchmarks can then be measured annually by CBER and reported publicly by CERT and the “Common Ground” Northwest Louisiana Regional Development Corporation.

5.3.3. Louisiana State University in Shreveport (LSUS)

The Analysis:

The Twenty First Century *is* The Intelligence Age. The most innovative, technologically sophisticated regional economies today are powered by high quality, higher education institutions that make direct inputs into the region’s smart workers, smart firms and smart communities. Thus, an investment in high quality higher education in Northwest Louisiana is an *essential* investment in the success of this Strategic Action Platform.

In the 2001 Master Plan for Public Post secondary Education, the Louisiana Board of Regents designated LSUS as the “regional university primarily serving the Shreveport/Bossier Metropolitan area and the Ark-La-Tex region”.

LSUS has the specific responsibility to meet the social, cultural, technological, and economic development needs of its service area by expanding its relationship with business, industry, governmental, educational and community organizations. A crucial anchor investment in higher education is needed to make this mandate a reality

The current Board of Regents funding formula funds LSUS at a level lower than any other 4-year institution in the State.

The Action:

To accomplish the overall mission of LSUS, and simultaneously achieve the goals as mandated by the Regents, the following issues must be addressed:

- This Strategic Action Platform recommends that seven key initiatives be developed and funded at LSUS in support of this Platform: Five of these initiatives involve increased funding for existing programs. Two initiatives are new. The five existing initiatives are: (1) the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER), (2) the Institute for Human Services and Public Policy (IHSP), (3) the Red River Watershed Management Institute (RRWMI), (4) the Division of Continuing Education and Public Service, and (5) Expanded Graduate Programs to meet identified regional economic needs. The two new initiatives are: (6) The Center for Entrepreneurial Development and Leadership (CEDL), and (7) The Center for Bioinformatics and Technology.
- This Strategic Action Platform recommends that legislative funding priorities for LSUS specifically include program development funds for those activities and partnerships that tie university programs to the regions economic development needs.

September 9, 2003

- Perhaps most importantly, this Platform recommends that LSUS and the LSUS Foundation in 2003-4 mirror the successful LSUSHSC-S and LSUSHSC-S Foundation strategy of 2002-3. LSUSHSC-S and the LSUSHSC-S Foundation undertook in 2002-3 to develop their own Strategic Plan. This very high quality effort then provided the basis for a collective appeal by LSUSHSC-S and the LSUSHSC-S Foundation, backed by the leading Chambers of Commerce, other economic development organizations and the Northwest Louisiana legislative delegation, to go jointly to Baton Rouge in the 2003 Legislative Session to propose an overall increase in the annual state funding formula for LSUSHSC-S. LSUS and the LSUS Foundation should now undertake the same strategy in 2003-4.

Next Steps:

Under the leadership of the LSUS Foundation, the Foundation and LSUS should develop a Strategic Action Plan for LSUS in 2003-4 of the same high quality as that developed last year for LSUSHSC-S. Armed with that Plan, the Foundation and LSUS can go to Baton Rouge in the 2004 Legislative Session to propose an overall increase in the annual state funding formula for LSUS, backed also by the leading Chambers and the Northwest Louisiana legislative delegation, and with the same expectation of success.

Section 6.0—Action: “Common Ground”: Overseeing Regional Performance

The Analysis:

Commitment Capital is the institutional capacity to implement a long-term vision and mission with self-renewing resources and energy in the face of dynamically changing global conditions. Commitment Capital is the capacity of private and public leaders to transcend barriers between institutions to integrate all other forms of capital—human, innovation, financial and infrastructure capital—into a dynamic whole whose interactive parts create a more innovative, risk-taking, future-oriented Northwest Louisiana. Commitment Capital is the institutionalized capacity to mobilize and focus individual Human Capital and collective Social Capital, laser-like, on measurable social and economic goals (Volume I, Section 5.4).

Thus, Commitment Capital is the most important missing form of capital in Northwest Louisiana. Shreveport, Bossier City and the region have many capable leaders—black and white—in many fields and communities and of all ages. Moreover, Northwest Louisiana has an important and rare attribute, which is both a potential strength and a glaring weakness in implementing this Strategic Action: the close interconnectedness of its leaders between and among key institutions to effectively implement this Strategic Action Platform. These leaders in the business, political, educational, and social service communities work together *individually* on a day-to-day basis. They must agree to join together *collectively* to overcome the many discrete silos that today separate communities, cities, casino hotels, medical centers, economic sectors, economic organizations, neighborhoods and ethnic groups.

These separate silos engender weakness and rob the whole region of its powerful, shared strength, a collective strength that has the potential to create tremendous comparative regional advantages for competing in the global economy.

Finally, although we all appreciate the successful outcomes of the 1985 study, it did not lead to an ongoing, self-sufficient, private-public regional partnership that could generate its own income sources and constantly re-examine, re-energize, and regenerate itself to seize new opportunities and address new barriers created by a rapidly changing global economy. Our goal this time around is not just to undertake a study, or create an Action Platform. *Together*, we will strive to create the ongoing institutional capacity and self-sufficient resources to keep the spirit of 1985 operationally alive seventeen years from now in 2020.

This current weakness becomes even more threatening in the face of galvanizing regional initiatives now underway from other Louisiana regional rivals such as the New Orleans Chamber/MetroVision and the

September 9, 2003

nine parish Capital Region Competitive Strategy led by the Baton Rouge Chamber. In the face of these rapidly growing regional rivals, Northwest Louisiana collectively needs to mobilize all capable leaders, in an effort to compete at the same level and increase its overall competitive advantage. This can only be done if all parties are working towards the same goal on the same high common ground (Volume I, Section 5.4).

The Action:

Create the capacity for Northwest Louisiana's individuals, families, communities, firms and institutions to compete in today's global, technology-driven economy.

Grow the regional economy in ways that increase the opportunity for all individuals, families and communities to contribute to and benefit from a higher quality of life in Northwest Louisiana.

This vision is possible through the work and success of the "*Common Ground*" *Northwest Louisiana Regional Development Corporation*. The goal of this "*Common Ground*" regional development corporation will be to speak with one voice to private industry and to state and federal government about Northwest Louisiana development issues.

All of the individual Strategic Actions in this Platform should coalesce in a set of strategic institutions that then mutually develop their strategic goals, performance measures, and public accountability in concert with the "*Common Ground*" *Northwest Louisiana Regional Development Corporation*.

Next Steps:

The leaders of the investor organizations who commissioned this platform for Strategic Action should serve as an informal beginning board to suggest the leadership composition and structure of the "Common Ground" Northwest Louisiana Regional Development Corporation.

- The *Consortium for Education, Research and Training of North Louisiana (CERT)* is the paradigm for regional strategic partnerships responsible for segments of the overall regional strategy in this Strategic Action Platform.
- The *Comprehensive Shreveport-Bossier CDC* described in Section 2.0 could perform that function for the region wide community development effort.
- The *leading medical centers* could come together (instead of operating in silos) in a similar effort to follow through with the strategic actions outlined in Section 3.1, Building Healthcare as a Regional Power.
- The *Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau* is the regional coordinating and marketing organization, described in Volume II, Section 3.2, Strengthening Tourism and Recreation.
- The *Red River Heart of the Region* is a new Marketing Collaboration described in Volume II, Section 3.3.
- The *Affordable Retirement Communities Strategic Action* could be come a region wide initiative after its pilot developmnet by Minden (Volume II, Section 3.3).
- The *New Enterprise Consortium* is described in Volume II, Section 4.1.
- The *Biomedical Research Foundation* is the vehicle for creating New Biomedical and Biotechnology Enterprise, described in Volume II, Section 4.2.
- An *All Industry Procurement Consortium* is proposed in Volume II, Section 4.3 to help foster sound, new Minority Enterprise.

September 9, 2003

- The *Alliance for Education* is the coalition which has forged the initiatives detailed in Section 5.1, Investing in K-12.
- A *New Workforce consortium* that unites employers, workers and trainers, based on Workforce Florida (Volume II, Apperndix 8) is detailed in Section 5.2, Investing in Workforce Education and Training.
- *CERT* is the coalition which is the model for coordinating higher eduaction, as detailed in Section 5.3.2, Investing in Higher Education.

Each of these regional consortia, in turn, could develop their strategic goals, performance measures and public reporting working with the “*Common Ground*” *Northwest Louisiana Regional Development Corporation Board*.