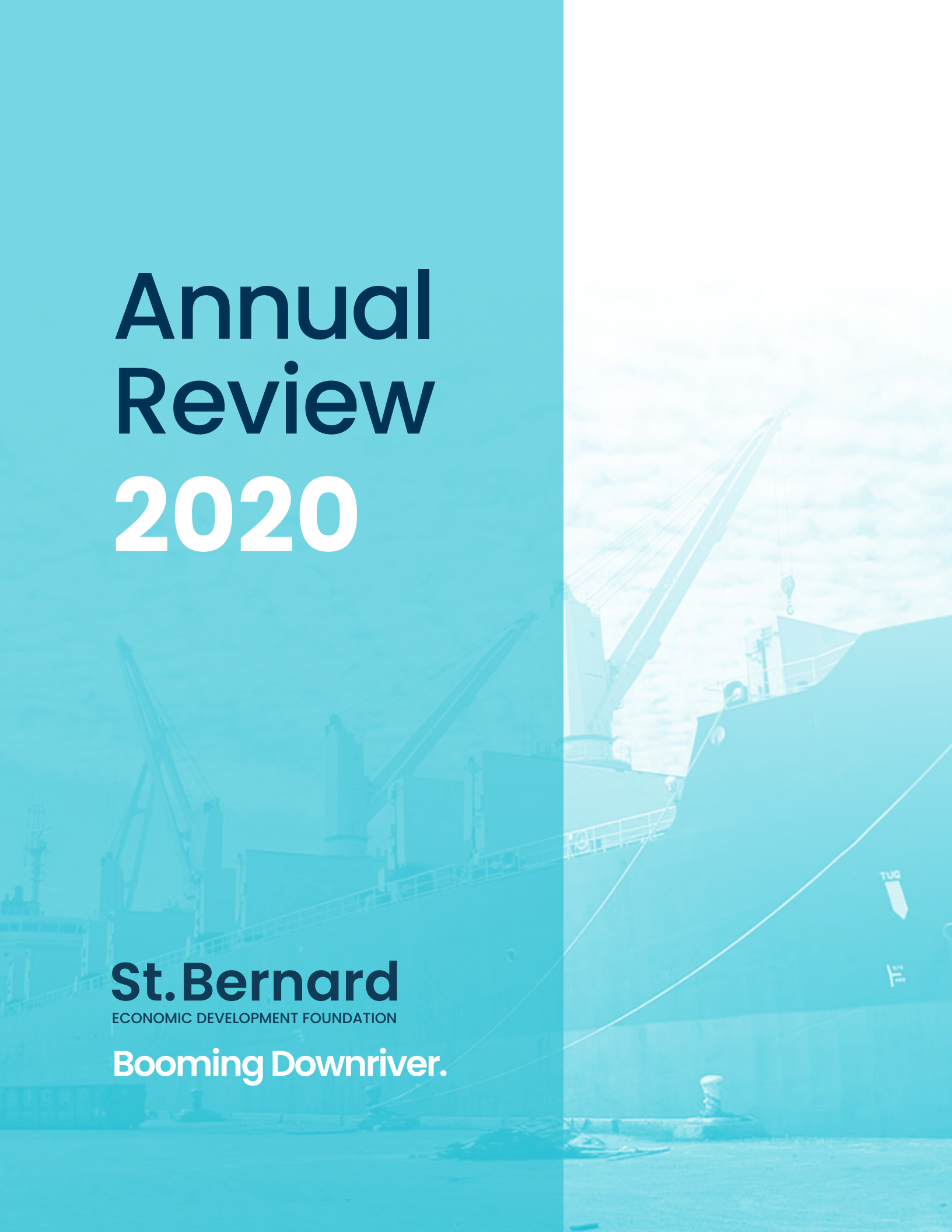


# Annual Review 2020

**St. Bernard**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

**Booming Downriver.**





# St. Bernard

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

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## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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*Meaghan McCormack*

It would be hard to share some sort of insight into 2020 that hasn't already been said. Worldwide, we continue to reel from an unprecedented pandemic that has shown all of us struggle, pain, and discomfort. Nationwide, we have dealt with political and social unrest. And, on top of this, the Greater New Orleans area was hit with multiple hurricanes and tropical storms, halting progress to rebuild what was lost.

Yet, when you look around St. Bernard, you see a community that knows how to go through the gauntlet together. The people and businesses that make up our great Parish have each other's backs. Our people have provided food and medical care for those struggling. They've asked about each other's family members and offered their hand to help when needed most. In the toughest of times, St. Bernard has not backed down from the challenges at hand, and in the long run, this will prove fruitful for all who call our communities 'Down the Road' home.

At the St. Bernard Economic Development Foundation, we've prided ourselves on providing hands-on assistance and connectivity to our people, businesses, and other stakeholders in order to get through

these trying times. Our guidance in applying for PPP loans and other funding sources has helped small businesses keep the lights on for another year. Our workshops and webinars have connected community members to politicians and business leaders, who have given insights and best practices on navigating a tumultuous economic landscape.

On top of these efforts, we have worked night and day to ensure we are prepared as possible to prosper when things return to normal. Our new site selection tools will allow businesses and developers to access St. Bernard like never before. Our Parish's marketing efforts have yielded growth in residential development, providing a haven for those escaping the density of urban areas. Local workforce development initiatives and educational institutions are more prepared than ever to tackle the needs of the future economy.

And, to conclude 2020, we were given a peek at said future, with the Port of New Orleans entering an early-stage agreement for a \$1.5 billion project in Violet that would set the stage for St. Bernard becoming an international trade hub. With the potential for over 3,000 jobs created in our Parish, this project would not only be the largest in the history of the Parish, but one of the grandest Louisiana has ever seen.

The Advocate reported a 42% increase in GDP in St. Bernard from 2016-2019, the 2nd largest of any Parish in the Greater New Orleans area. We are eager to see the continuation of this massive growth as our economy returns to normal.

Our work is not possible without many investors, community partners, board members, and your commitment to the St. Bernard Economic Development Foundation. We appreciate the trust and confidence you extend to us.

With gratitude,



**MEAGHAN MCCORMACK**  
*Executive Director*

# 2020 HIGHLIGHTS



## Small Business Growth

Over 150 new businesses received permits in 2020, including a plethora of new e-commerce platforms as many adjusted to life at home. Brick and mortar openings include Fry and Pie, Shop Aniston Lane, and Parish Beauty Bar.



## Corporate Attraction and Expansion

St. Bernard's top employers include Associated Terminals, Boasso Global, Chalmette Refining, Domino Sugar and Ochsner. SBEDF's Business Retention & Expansion Program aids with incentives, lead generation, and site selection for a variety of businesses via one-on-one meetings and guidance.



## Site Selection

Utilizing Entergy's Buildings and Sites online platform, SBEDF bolstered its site selection presence by inventorying over 50 properties in the Parish primed for current or future development. This work will help limit barriers to entry for companies, enable us to respond directly to RFIs, and showcase the opportunity available in St. Bernard Parish.



## Residential Construction

347 new residential construction permits were issued in 2020, solidifying what we already know to be true: St. Bernard is home to some of the fastest growing towns in America. New residents means added local business support, more people taking advantage of work opportunities in the Parish, and further economic growth.



## Infrastructure Improvements

St. Bernard Parish Government and Coastal Department completed over \$135 million in infrastructure improvements throughout the Parish. Projects include marsh restoration, road resurfacing, drainage upgrades, and other beautification efforts. Over \$450 million in projects remain in the engineering and planning phases for the near future.

The St. Bernard Port, Harbor and Terminal District broke ground on its new warehouse facility for Domino Sugar, which will house 80,000 square feet worth of Domino's finished sugar product before shipping. With the first storage facility already underway, a second, much larger warehouse is already in the works at the Port's Chalmette Terminal.

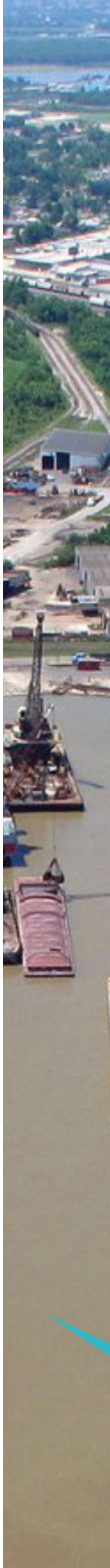
The St. Bernard Port also began initial testing and infrastructure improvements on the Chalmette Slip for its long-term renovation and revitalization plan.



## Workforce Development & Education

Nunez Community College expanded to over 60 non-credit offerings, providing both online and in-person courses meant to help bridge the gap between talent and industry in the Parish. The College's partnership with Tri-Parish Works has also ensured those undergoing career pivots due to COVID-19 have an efficient, affordable way to discover new modes of income.

St. Bernard Parish School District and Nunez Community College's utilization of hybrid learning methods allowed for students to both remain on track in their education and stay healthy.





## Community Acknowledgment

St. Bernard Parish President **Guy McInnis** was appointed by Governor John Bel Edwards to the Louisiana Board of Commerce and Industry, tasked with advising on and approving or denying applications for tax incentive programs, including Enterprise Zone, Industrial Tax Exemption, Quality Jobs and Restoration Tax Abatement. This most prestigious appointment is very important for the citizens of St. Bernard and our Parish's ability to utilize these programs to attract employers.

**Kim Keene**, CEO of St. Bernard Parish Hospital and Executive Committee member, received the Chancellor's Vision Award from Dr. Tina Tinney, Board Member and Chancellor of Nunez Community College. Keene has guided the hospital through the COVID-19 pandemic, where over 2,600 vaccines were administered in December of 2020.

**Walter J. Leger Jr.**, a founding member of SBEDF and Executive Committee member, was appointed to the Port of New Orleans' Board of Commissioners by Governor John Bel Edwards. Leger is a Partner at Leger & Shaw and will serve as one of two St. Bernard Parish natives on the Board.

# St. Bernard

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

## OUR PROGRAMS



### Startup St. Bernard

CORE Louisiana Counseling & Recovery Center, a substance use and mental health practice located in St. Bernard, won the sixth annual Startup St. Bernard pitch competition. Held virtually for the first time ever due to COVID-19, and in partnership with the Meraux Foundation, local sponsors still did their part to ensure a prize package of over \$100k would be granted to the top winner, along with \$5,000 each for the other two finalists.



### Shop Small Week

For the fourth year, Small Business Saturday was expanded to a week-long “Shop Small” campaign in partnership with American Express, the St. Bernard Chamber of Commerce, St. Bernard Magazine, the Old Arabi Neighborhood Association, the St. Bernard Parish Office of Tourism, and over 35 businesses. SBEDF structured the event to include daily discounts to shoppers, increased social media promotion for small businesses, and prizes to lucky shoppers from their favorite stores. Along with the St. Bernard Chamber, we also introduced our new Shop Small St. Bernard mascot, #BerniethBernard, who popped up at various businesses throughout the week.



### Grow St. Bernard

Grow St. Bernard, powered by SBEDF and the St. Bernard Chamber of Commerce, took place in the summer and fall of 2020. The six-part educational series provided valuable information to new, growing, and pre-revenue businesses. Sessions included presentations from entrepreneurs and notable guest speakers from throughout the region on business pivots, technological innovation, communications strategies, and connection to funding and community resources. The program had a record year for attendance and participation, with 18 business owners and employees graduating in 2020.





Photo top

Presenting sponsors of the 2020 Redfish World Series, including Parish President Guy McInnis and SBEDF Executive Director Meaghan McCormack.

Photo top middle

Nicole Goldin of CORE: Louisiana Counseling & Recovery Center makes her winning, virtual pitch for Startup St. Bernard 2020.

Photo bottom middle

Small Business Saturday, the kickoff for St. Bernard's week-long Shop Small Week, took place at Cafe Aquarius and included a guest appearance from Bernie the Bernard.

Photo bottom

2020's Grow St. Bernard sessions were hosted at both the Chamber and SBEDF's boardrooms, allowing for proper social distancing as participants learned tips for growing their businesses.

## AND INITIATIVES

### COVID-19/Disaster Relief

With COVID-19 and multiple hurricanes affecting our community in 2020, SBEDF stepped up to guide businesses and other community members to the support they needed. From walking businesses through PPP Loan applications to advertising state and federal grant options for COVID and disaster relief, SBEDF continues to stand by our Parish through anything and everything.

### Political Connectivity

SBEDF hosted webinars with U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy regarding state efforts targeted to St. Bernard Parish and State Treasurer John Schroder in order to detail Louisiana's Main Street Recovery Program, which provided our local companies much needed COVID-19 relief through small business grant funding.

### Economic Development Week

St. Bernard Parish and the SBEDF officially marked National Economic Development Week from May 4-9, 2020 to celebrate the contributions of positive economic development and explain the role of the profession in our local community.

### Partnership with the St. Bernard Chamber of Commerce

In June of 2020, SBEDF and the St. Bernard Chamber of Commerce entered into an MOU to further establish the relationship between the two organizations and better serve the current and future business community in St. Bernard Parish.

### Partnership to Assist Southwest Louisiana

In the wake of Hurricane Laura, SBEDF was quick to step up to the plate and join a team of professional organizations collecting donations for the Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance to aid recovery efforts.

### Community Support

SBEDF was proud to support a variety of community events in 2020, including the Redfish World Series, the St. Bernard Seafood Market at Hopedale Marina, and a FICO Credit Score Webinar. We also provided application guidance and information for local small businesses owners to enter programs with Idea Village and Fund 17, two local startup incubators. For the first time in history, both of these programs accepted participants from our parish.

### Census Completion

In partnership with Nunez Community College, SBEDF provided digital access for Parish residents to complete the U.S. Census at Nunez's Campus Library. Used as a crucial metric for funding and other economic development purposes, accurate Census data will help increase business attraction and retention in St. Bernard, improving quality of life throughout the Parish.

### New Website

The new, interactive, revamped SBEDF website was also launched in 2020, enabling residents, business owners, investors, and site selectors alike to easily access information about incentives, workforce programs, doing business, and quality of life of St. Bernard Parish.

### New Leadership

While the pandemic was reaching its initial heights, SBEDF was busy in its search for its next leader. In April, Parish President Guy McInnis, Council Chair Richie Lewis, and the SBEDF Board of Directors appointed Meaghan McCormack to the position following an extensive search and selection process lead by a national executive search firm.



## PUBLIC POLICY

### LAKE BORGNE MARSH CREATION

#### NRDA Funding Approved

Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards announced that \$114.7 million in Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) funding has been approved to construct the Lake Borgne Marsh Creation (Increment 1) project near Shell Beach. The project will create over 2,800 acres of marsh, making it the largest marsh creation project in the state's history.

### COMMUNITY PROJECTS

#### Supporting Community Initiatives

SBEDF provided letters of support for various other projects including:

- Nunez Community College's application for the U.S. Department of Education's Reimagining Workforce Preparation grant
- Parish Government, St. Bernard Parish Hospital, the St. Bernard Port, and the Meraux Foundation's EDA roadway grant application for improvements to local infrastructure
- St. Bernard Port's application for the Delta Regional Authority's States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP)



*Photo*

Kim Keene, CEO of St. Bernard Parish Hospital, receives the 2020 Chancellor's Vision Award from Nunez Community College Chancellor Dr. Tina Tinney. Both Keene and Tinney are members of SBEDF's Board of Directors.



# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Material assistance includes identifying an original lead or assisting in at least one of the following areas: (1) business incentives, (2) site identification / selection, (3) market research, (4) key business introductions, (5) zoning permitting assistance, (6) public relations, or (7) any other assistance that materially and positively impacts a business' ability and decision to locate, expand, or grow in St. Bernard Parish.



**ST. BERNARD PORT, HARBOR,  
AND TERMINAL DISTRICT**  
**New State of the Art Facility Planned**

The Port entered official agreements with The Port of New Orleans to sell their Violet property for the building of a new, state of the art container facility. The project, which is currently in a 2-year due-diligence phase, is projected to bring 3,000 jobs and \$1.5 billion in investment to St. Bernard.



**DOMINO SUGAR**  
**Expanding Warehouse**

ASR Group, owner of Domino Sugar, committed to future growth and job creation in St. Bernard Parish by working with the St. Bernard Port to expand their warehouse space.



**GULF COAST BANK & TRUST**  
**\$250 Billion in PPP Loans**

With a major presence in St. Bernard Parish, Gulf Coast administered over \$250 billion in PPP Loans to over 2,500 businesses throughout the Greater New Orleans region.



**THE RANCH**  
**Expanding Operations**

The Ranch Film Studios, one of the largest film and TV production studios in Louisiana with over 200,000 sq. ft of production space on 27 acres of land, expanded its production operations with help from Louisiana's Entertainment Job Creation Program. In addition, The Ranch intends to raise \$50 million to restore and renovate the abandoned Ford Assembly Plant in Arabi, to further build out its goal of establishing a full-service content creation and entertainment hub.



**ST. BERNARD PARISH HOSPITAL  
| OCHSNER HEALTH SYSTEMS**  
**Increased Staff and ICU Capacity**

To serve our parish and accommodate the large uptick in patients due to the pandemic, St. Bernard Parish Hospital expanded their medical and administrative staff and the ICU, increased community services and bed capacity, and added a virtual clinic. The hospital also began administering vaccines for COVID-19.



**ASSOCIATED TERMINALS**  
**Celebrating 30 Years**

Associated Terminals celebrated its 30th Anniversary in 2020, handling over 8.0 million net tons at three midstream buoy systems within the Port of St. Bernard, the Violet Docks, and the Chalmette Slip.



**ABSOLUTE HEALTH & WELLNESS PHARMACY**  
**Growth with Specialized Services**

Absolute Health & Wellness Pharmacy opened their doors in late 2019 and increased employees and sales in 2020 after expanding specialized services to include a mobile app, free delivery, immunizations, medication therapy management and diabetes care.

# St. Bernard

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

## MEET OUR INVESTORS

SBEDF is supported by the private and public sectors with a vested interest in economic growth and prosperity for St. Bernard Parish. Our organization could not meet our goals without the support, generosity, and vision of our investors.

### Top Investor



## DIAMOND INVESTORS



## IMPACT CHAMPIONS



## PARTNERS



## COMMUNITY COLLEAGUES

BaumTech

David Fernandez

Kim Keene

Mindy Airhart

Zeljko Franks

Danielle Martin

Jessica Daigle

Frederick J. Sigur  
Investment  
Company

Meaghan  
McCormack

Elizabeth  
Ellison-Frost

Bill Haines

Stephen & Erin  
Reuther

Deborah D. Keller  
and Partners, LLC

Drew Heaphy

Sean K. Warner

# 2020 BOARD MEMBERS

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Sean Warner,  
Chair**  
*Gulf Coast Bank & Trust Co.*

**Zeljko Franks,  
Vice Chair**  
*Associated Terminals*

**Drew Heaphy,  
Treasurer**  
*St. Bernard Port, Harbor,  
& Terminal District*

**Bill Haines,  
Secretary**  
*The Meraux Foundation*

**Joseph S. DiFatta Jr.,  
Past Chair**  
*St. Bernard Parish Sheriff's  
Department*

**Kim Keene**  
*St. Bernard Parish Hospital*

**Deborah D. Keller,  
Immediate Past Chair**  
*Deborah D. Keller &  
Partners*

**Walter J. Leger Jr.,  
At-Large/Past Chair**  
*Leger & Shaw Attorneys  
and Counselors*

## VOTING APPOINTED BOARD MEMBERS

**Lena Nunez**  
*St. Bernard Tourist  
Commission*

**Lisamarie Brandon**  
*Rain CII*

**Cindi Meyer**  
*State Farm Insurance*

**Mindy Nunez Airhart**  
*Southern Services &  
Equipment*

**Ross Gonzales**  
*St. Bernard Port, Harbor &  
Terminal District*

**Frederick J. Sigur Jr.**  
*Frederick J. Sigur  
Investment Company*

**Honorable Kim Jones**  
*St. Bernard Parish Court  
House Division "C"*

**Cullen Tonry**  
*St. Bernard Bar Association*

**Al Claude**  
*New Orleans Metropolitan  
Association of Realtors*

**Taryn M. Rogers**  
*Valero*

**Elizabeth Ellison-Frost**  
*PBF Energy*

**Joni P. Bathel**  
*Entergy*

**Terri Cerniglia**  
*Capital One Bank*

**Jeff Pohlmann**  
*Today's Ketch Seafood*

**Robert Campo**  
*United Commercial  
Fisherman's Association*

## VOTING MEMBERS/ PUBLIC OFFICIALS

**Parish President Guy  
McInnis**  
*St. Bernard Parish  
Government*

**Councilwoman Wanda  
Alcon**  
*St. Bernard Parish Council*

**Dr. Tina Tinney**  
*Nunez Community College*

**Superintendent Doris  
Voitier**  
*St. Bernard Parish Public  
Schools*

## HONORARY MEMBERS

**James Pohlmann**  
*St. Bernard Parish Sheriff's  
Department*

**Jaylynn Turner**  
*St. Bernard Parish Assessor*

**Senator Sharon Hewitt**  
*Louisiana State Legislature*

**Representative Ray  
Garofalo**  
*Louisiana State Legislature*

**Diana Dysart**  
*St. Bernard Parish School  
Board*

**Randy Nunez**  
*Clerk of 34th Judicial  
District Court*

**Perry Nicosia**  
*St. Bernard Parish District  
Attorney*

**Katie Tommaseo**  
*St. Bernard Parish Office of  
Tourism*

The mission of the St. Bernard Economic Development Foundation is to create and retain jobs, build prosperity, and improve the quality of life in St. Bernard Parish.



[www.sbedf.org](http://www.sbedf.org)

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