



# Annual Review 2021

**St. Bernard**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

**Booming Downriver.**

# 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



**PORT NOLA**  
THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS

ST. BERNARD



### IMPACT CHAMPIONS



### PARTNERS



### BUILDERS



### COMMUNITY COLLEAGUES

*Community members who donated to SBEDF during Give NOLA Day*

BaumTech	David Fernandez	Meaghan McCormack
Mindy Nunez Airhart	Zeljko Franks	Rachel Nunez
Stephanie Bell	Frederick J. Sigur Investment Company	Teri Polhmann Ponstein's Food Store
Lisamarie Kraemer Brandon	Bill Haines	Stephen & Erin Reuther
Terri Cerniglia	Drew Heaphy	Tina Tinney
Jessica Daigle	Kim Keene	Sean K. Warner
Elizabeth Ellison-Frost	Elizabeth "Lisa" Borne Kott	
Deborah D. Keller and Partners, LLC	Danielle Martin	

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Louisiana Economic Development has recognized St. Bernard as the state's newest Louisiana Development Ready Community. From left: Steering Committee members Mindy Nunez Airhart, Karen Boudrie, Jason Stopa, Ross Berlin, Meaghan McCormack, Brad Lambert, Amanda Coates, Howard Luna, Bill Haines.

# Letter from the Executive Director



Meaghan McCormack,  
Executive Director, SBEDF

2021 was a remarkable year for St. Bernard Parish. Despite the challenges that resulted from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and from Hurricane Ida, St. Bernard and its residents continue to thrive. This year, community members came together to revive beloved community events, aid those who needed it across Louisiana, and support small businesses that keep the parish going. In addition, as a result of the 2020 census, St. Bernard

was rated the fastest-growing parish in Louisiana by population and had the second-highest per-capita GDP in the state. This ranking reflects the strength and resilience of our population as well as the enormous potential on the horizon for continued growth and prosperity.

Here at the St. Bernard Economic Development Foundation, we are committed to supporting the businesses, employees, and non-profits who create and retain jobs, build prosperity, and improve quality of life in St. Bernard. Our participation in the Louisiana Development Ready Communities program resulted in a strategic economic development plan that will serve as our North Star as we continue to develop and expand our offerings to serve the parish. This plan, developed through an extensive community engagement process, is truly a reflection of the dreams and priorities of the parish and we are committed to achieving the goals we set forth.

In addition, our workshops, webinars, and programs have supported hundreds of businesses this year and have connected community members to business leaders and elected officials. Grow St. Bernard, with the addition of scholarships for BIPOC professionals, had the largest participation to date. Our continued success with Startup St. Bernard reflects the potential for innovation and entrepreneurship in St. Bernard. Finally, our inaugural Small Business Matters Summit provided important insight into resources for business growth in the Greater New Orleans region.

To top off these initiatives, SBEDF has deepened partnerships with key community pillars, including Parish Government, the Meraux Foundation, Chalmette Refining, Nunez Community College, and others. Our policy work has created a more business friendly environment for those looking to relocate or expand in St. Bernard. Our grant writing efforts have opened the doors to funding opportunities for SBEDF and partner organizations so that we can expand infrastructure, programs, and initiatives for all. Finally, our participation in the AmeriCorps VISTA and YouthForce NOLA programs have allowed us to host interns and volunteers who are building the capacity of SBEDF while gaining valuable work experience.

As we look ahead to next year, we are optimistic about the potential for 2022. SBEDF's Workforce Development Collaborative has kicked off its first meeting, bringing together employers, educators, and workforce partners to ensure residents are accessing fulfilling and high-wage career pathways. In addition, SBEDF is slated to open St. Bernard Parish's first-ever coworking space in Arabi to provide office space for small businesses. Chalmette Refining will kick off their \$550 million investment in a new renewable diesel facility while the Port of New Orleans continues to explore their \$1.5 billion investment in the Louisiana International Terminal. Finally, the St. Bernard Port and St. Bernard Parish Government have budgeted millions for investment in infrastructure that will help sustain our rapid growth and potential. These are just some of the amazing projects we have in store, building off the strong momentum we created in 2021.

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, SBEDF

# 2021 Board of Directors

## Executive Committee Members

**Zeljko Franks,  
Chair**

*Associated Terminals*

**Bill Haines,  
Vice Chair**

*The Meraux Foundation*

**Drew Heaphy,  
Treasurer**

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

**Kim Keene,  
Secretary**

*St. Bernard Parish Hospital*

**Joseph S. DiFatta Jr.,  
Past Chair**

*St. Bernard Parish Sheriff's  
Office*

**Dr. Tina Tinney,  
At-Large**

*Nunez Community College*

**Sean Warner,  
Immediate Past Chair**

*Gulf Coast Bank & Trust Co.*

**Walter J. Leger Jr.,  
Past Chair**

*Leger & Shaw Attorneys and  
Counselors*

## Voting Appointed Board Members

**Lena Nunez**

*St. Bernard Tourist  
Commission*

**Lisamarie Brandon**

*Rain CII*

**Mindy Nunez Airhart**

*Southern Services &  
Equipment*

**Ross Gonzales**

*St. Bernard Port, Harbor &  
Terminal District*

**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*

**Lisa Borne**

*Tabary & Borne, LLC*

**Rachel Nunez**

*Home Bank*

**Travis Moore**

*Hancock Whitney*

**Kevin Reichert**

*St. Bernard Community  
Foundation*

## Voting Members/ Public Officials

**Parish President Guy  
McInnis**

*St. Bernard Parish  
Government*

**Councilman Howard Luna**

*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  
Office*

**Jaylynn Turner**

*St. Bernard Parish Assessor*

**Senator Joseph Bouie Jr.**

*Louisiana State Legislature*

**Representative Ray  
Garofalo**

*Louisiana State Legislature*

**Senator Sharon Hewitt**

*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  
Government Office  
of Tourism & Film*

# Programs

**"SBEDF tackles the barriers to doing business head-on, ensuring that the business climate is competitive for new and existing companies alike."**

— Sean Warner, SBEDF Past Chair



Glass Half Full won the grand prize in SBEDF's 2021 Startup St. Bernard competition.

## Startup St. Bernard

Glass Half Full, a grassroots glass recycling company that collects glass and converts it into beach-like sand and glass cullet for disaster relief, eco-construction, new glass products, and more was selected as the winner of the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Startup St. Bernard pitch competition. Startup St. Bernard was a hybrid event this year, hosted by the Meraux Foundation at Docville Farm and streamed live by Chicory Productions. While Glass Half Full took home the grand prize of nearly \$100K in cash and in-kind services, we were proud to grant \$5,000 each for the two finalists: Nice Plants Good Pots and St. Bernard Ecotourism.

## Grow St. Bernard

Grow St. Bernard, powered by SBEDF and the St. Bernard Chamber of Commerce, took place in the summer and fall of 2021. The six-part educational series provided valuable information to new, growing, and pre-revenue businesses and included sessions pertaining to customer engagement, branding, diversity, equity, and inclusion, participating in the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, and building company culture. The program had a record year for attendance, with 24 participants. In addition, thanks to a grant from Entergy, we were able to offer 13 scholarships to BIPOC business owners in the parish to ensure that everyone in the St. Bernard entrepreneurial ecosystem can access the resources they need to grow their business.



Opening session speaker Bill Ganon teaches the participants how to position their companies for growth.



**\$100K**

Awarded to Glass Half Full, the 2021 Startup St. Bernard winner.



**13**

Scholarships awarded to BIPOC business owners.

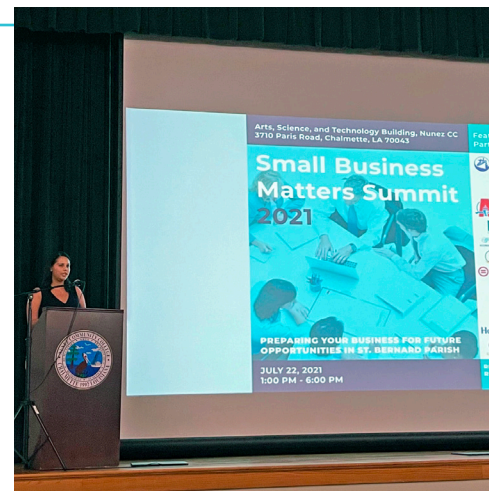


**20+**

Businesses participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Shop Small campaign.

### Small Business Matters

In July of 2021, SBEDF kicked off the first-ever Small Business Matters Summit, a one-day experience for small business owners looking to become aware of and leverage future opportunities in the pipeline for St. Bernard Parish. The program included a diverse lineup of speakers, from business consultants to workforce developers, all looking to support St. Bernard and Greater New Orleans businesses into a future period of growth and prosperity. The event attracted over 80 registered participants and was hosted in partnership with Nunez Community College, the Meraux Foundation, the St. Bernard Port, and Parish Government.



Opening speaker Meaghan McCormack gives an overview of St. Bernard's economic growth.



Shop Small participants each received a reusable tote.

### Shop Small Week

For the 5<sup>th</sup> year, SBEDF kicked off Small Business Saturday followed by a week-long "Shop Small" campaign in partnership with the St. Bernard Chamber of Commerce. Over 20 local businesses participated through social media promotion, daily discounts, and prizes for lucky shoppers. Our Shop Small Mascot, #BernietheBernard, could also be found supporting local businesses throughout the week and encouraging residents to shop local this holiday season.

# 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.



## Port of New Orleans – \$1.5B

This year, the Port of New Orleans secured land for the proposed \$1.5 billion container terminal development along the Mississippi River in Violet, LA. The new project, while currently in the conceptual design and public permitting phase, is anticipated to create 635 jobs in St. Bernard Parish upon opening, and up to 4,337 jobs by 2050. The project has the potential to put St. Bernard Parish, the GNO (Greater New Orleans) region, and the state on the map as a leading global transportation hub; an industry that has become increasingly important throughout 2021.



## Chalmette Refining – \$550M

With the approval of PBF Energy's Chalmette Refining Industrial Tax Exemption Program application, Chalmette Refining has proposed a \$550 million investment into a new renewable diesel project aimed at retrofitting an idled refinery unit, constructing a new pre-treatment unit, and making additions to docking, loading, offloading and tankage capabilities. These investments in a Renewable Diesel Unit will put St. Bernard at the forefront of the green energy transition, bringing new full-time jobs to the refinery, new opportunities for local businesses, and new tax revenue to the parish.



## Domino Sugar – \$4M

This year, Domino Sugar has invested \$4 million into the construction of a new warehouse at the St. Bernard Port, Harbor, and Terminal District's Industrial Park that will serve as a storage space for the company's refined and finished sugar products from the Arabi refinery. Construction of the 80,000 square foot warehouse broke ground in April and is estimated to be fully operational by the end of 2022. The warehouse will add 10 permanent jobs upon completion, with up to 150 additional jobs expected in the project's second phase of development.



## SBEDF – Coworking Space – \$500k

SBEDF is working on the creation of St. Bernard's first-ever coworking space. Plans have been drafted to transform a state of the art building managed by SBEDF to serve as a hub for small businesses, entrepreneurs, remote workers, and non-profits and will provide tenants with access to affordable, high-quality office space, conference rooms, and programming.



# Initiatives

**Our goals are ambitious, our vision is transformative, and our efforts are a catalyst for economic growth in our community.**



## Development Ready

Louisiana Economic Development has recognized St. Bernard as the State's newest Louisiana Development Ready Community. The parish becomes the 48<sup>th</sup> participant in the community development program, now in its thirteenth year.

As part of the program, SBEDF worked with diverse community partners, including Parish Government, to gather community input through surveys, town hall meetings, and committee meetings leading to the development of a strategic plan. This plan will allow SBEDF and our partners to leverage parish assets and address challenges to become more competitive in attracting growth to St. Bernard.



## Grants

With the addition of an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer, SBEDF has significantly increased our grant writing capacity and has applied for nearly \$5 million worth of grant funding.

Some notable awards include \$35,000 from Rural LISC to support the creation of a Rural Workforce Development Collaborative and to improve technical assistance to local companies. In addition, a grant from Entergy provided 13 scholarships to BIPOC Grow St. Bernard Participants. Finally, St. Bernard Parish Government is slated to receive a \$2 million EDA grant for the construction of a critical North-South Connector Road as a result of an application that was written and managed by SBEDF. Many more grants remain in the pipeline for 2022!

SBEDF also continues to assist other partner organizations with the identification, selection, and application of grant opportunities related to workforce development, infrastructure improvements, and increased quality of life.



## Coalition for Coastal Resilience

This year, Executive Director Meaghan McCormack was selected to the GNO, Inc. Coalition for Coastal Resilience and the Economy (CCRE).

CCRE is a neutral, non-partisan group of leaders from the Southeast Louisiana business community and is positioned as an informed, educated voice of advocacy for sustainable restoration efforts in Louisiana's wetlands, river, delta, and coastline.

Through participation in CCRE, McCormack will be able to ensure that St. Bernard is well-positioned for climate resilience, workforce development in the green jobs sector, and business expansion.



## AmeriCorps

SBEDF was accepted as an AmeriCorps VISTA sponsor organization, hosting our first full-time AmeriCorps volunteer who served in the position of Development and Investor Relations Assistant.

The AmeriCorps VISTA program will continue to expand the capacity of SBEDF to serve St. Bernard, while providing valuable work and professional development experience to our volunteers.

We are looking forward to continuing to host more AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers in 2022.



## Real Estate

In 2021, SBEDF developed the first-ever St. Bernard Real Estate Committee to foster collaboration between developers, agents, prospective commercial tenants, and SBEDF. This committee is focusing on streamlining site selection efforts so that businesses and developers looking to invest in St. Bernard can easily access the real estate information they need.

In addition to the Real Estate Committee, SBEDF has doubled down inventorying properties on our site selector tool, with over 60 buildings and sites listed on a publicly accessible database.

SBEDF also partnered with the Regional Planning Commission to apply for a Brownfields Assessment Grant from the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency). If awarded, St. Bernard will be able to cover the cost of Phase One and Two environmental assessments, cleanup planning, and inventory development of potentially contaminated sites. This will remove many of the barriers to reactivating prime real estate locations, creating more opportunities for commercial growth, and preserving important historical structures throughout the parish.



## Disaster Relief

In the wake of Hurricane Ida, SBEDF was quick to step up to the plate and join the efforts to assist all who were affected across Southeast Louisiana. During the storm and its aftermath, SBEDF served as a resource for distributing timely information regarding community relief, business closures, and disaster assistance. In addition, SBEDF hosted the SBA's Disaster Loan Outreach Center in our boardroom from November through January, serving over 350 residents and closing 153 disaster loans.

To help our neighbors throughout the southeast region, SBEDF formed a partnership with the Meraux Foundation and the St. Bernard Chamber of Commerce to donate over \$10,000 to the River Region Chamber of Commerce. This money was distributed directly to those businesses who were most affected in the River Parishes – St. James, St. John, and St. Charles Parishes. SBEDF also participated in St. Bernard Day on the Bayou, distributing supplies to over 200 community members in Lafourche Parish.

# Public Policy

**SBEDF played a pivotal role in the development and approval of several business-friendly policy changes designed to promote innovation and the creation of high-paying, green jobs in St. Bernard Parish.**

In partnership with Nunez Community College, The Ranch Film Studios, and the Digital Media Institute, SBEDF authored and developed the St. Bernard Digital Media and Software Incentive which complements the State's existing Digital Media & Software Incentive. The incentive provides a plethora of cash rebates for digital media and software companies looking to not only expand their operations into St. Bernard Parish but hire local community members to join their teams. Through the creation of the most competitive digital media incentive in the state, St. Bernard will be able to attract high-wage jobs and provide sustainable, exciting, long-term career opportunities for the people who live here.

In addition, SBEDF served as a key consultant to PBF Energy | Chalmette Refining and Advantous Consulting throughout the process of applying for, and ultimately receiving an Industrial Tax Exemption Program (ITEP) abatement from all three local entities: the St. Bernard Parish School Board, Council, and Sheriff's Office. The proposed \$500 million investment, to be made to PBF Energy's existing Chalmette Refining facility, will serve as a top producer of biofuels and renewable diesel. The ITEP serves a crucial role in attracting investment funds to the St. Bernard project, which is expected to add 20 new, permanent jobs and at least 92 indirect jobs to the parish. Prior to this, St. Bernard was the only parish in the state which had never issued an ITEP, making this a monumental step for the community.



Parish President McInnis and Councilmembers stand with John Miralles, Meaghan McCormack, Tina Tinney, Grady Fitzpatrick and Jason Waggenspack after officially approving the Parish's Digital Media and Software Incentive Program

# 2021 Highlights

## Parish Growth

The 2020 census results are in, and there is no arguing the data: St. Bernard is Louisiana's fastest-growing parish. Since 2010, St. Bernard's population has grown 22%, compared to a state-wide growth rate of 2.7%. After the local population was decimated by Hurricane Katrina, this statistical bounce-back represents not only the commitment residents have to the community, but the opportunities we have ahead.

Population growth has also directly corresponded to a period of flourishing for the parish's business ecosystem. St. Bernard Parish is currently leading Louisiana's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth rates; up 45% from 2016-2019 and has the second-highest GDP in the state. With increased population and GDP growth comes more opportunities, higher investment, and dramatic improvements in quality of life.

## Small Business Growth

Over the last several years, St. Bernard Parish has experienced record numbers of business openings. In 2021, the St. Bernard Sheriff's Office reported 170 new businesses who had received occupational business licenses in St. Bernard Parish. These businesses were spread across a diverse range of sectors, but some notable ones include construction & contracting, retail (including electronic shopping), and personal care services such as beauty salons. This reflects the increasing shift towards modern, innovative jobs and the resiliency of the St. Bernard economy, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

## St. Bernard Parish Hospital

With over 400 employees, the St. Bernard Parish Hospital is one of the largest employers in St. Bernard Parish. In 2021, the hospital introduced a new department to offer pediatric services, welcoming two pediatricians to the facility. In addition to the expansion of services, the hours of operation for MRI, the lab and imaging were extended to better serve the community.

## Site Selection

In conjunction with our corporate attraction and expansion efforts, SBEDF serves as the one-stop-shop for all site selection needs for small and large businesses. Through the development and maintenance of our online site selector database, SBEDF can ensure that all businesses are able to find the perfect site for business creation, expansion, or relocation. SBEDF maintains a list of over 60 buildings and sites and is constantly working with our Real Estate Committee and other partners to keep the site up to date.

## IEDC Awards

In 2021, SBEDF was awarded two major industry awards from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC): a Gold Award for Neighborhood & Retail Development for our partnership with St. Bernard Parish Government on Sold on St. Bernard, and a Bronze Award for Entrepreneurship for our work with the Meraux Foundation in creating and hosting Startup St. Bernard. IEDC's Excellence in Economic Development Awards recognize the world's best economic development programs and partnerships, marketing materials, and the year's most influential leaders. Both awards have helped put St. Bernard Parish on the map as an innovative and business-friendly community and leaves SBEDF better equipped to ensure the local community is one that residents and business owners alike are proud of.



Meaghan McCormack and Jason Stopa at the International Economic Development Council's Awards Ceremony

## Corporate Attraction and Expansion

As a central pillar of SBEDF's role in the parish, our team works alongside large and small businesses who are looking to relocate to or expand in St. Bernard. In 2021, SBEDF successfully partnered with over 10 companies to assist in their expansion efforts. Some notable business developments include: The Ranch Film Studios expansion, which added 11 new jobs paying an average salary of \$51,818 plus benefits; Shibusa Systems' 13,000 square foot warehouse expansion; Outlet Deals Retail Center, and Planet Fitness' Chalmette location which included a \$750k investment in facilities improvements and employs 12 people. These are just some of the incredible businesses who opened their doors this year, with over 24 ribbon cuttings held for new businesses in the parish.



One of several homes featured in the St. Bernard Parade of Homes

## Residential Construction

306 new residential construction permits were issued in 2021, a direct reflection of St. Bernard Parish's standing as the fastest growing parish in the state of Louisiana and a testament to the incredible quality of life and economic opportunity afforded to residents in St. Bernard. Sold on St. Bernard, the 2021 winner of the International Economic Development Council's Neighborhood and Retail Development Award, continues to provide access to lots for development, keeping costs low and ensuring the creation of high-quality family homes.



Chalmette Refinery

## Infrastructure Improvements

St. Bernard Parish Government continues to make significant investments in the infrastructure that holds our community together. From roads to parks to boat slips, St. Bernard is more accessible and livable than ever before.

In 2021, St. Bernard Parish Government invested a total of \$10 million in infrastructure improvements across the parish. This investment includes the development of several monumental projects, including the Chalmette Slip, the Bikeway and Pedestrian Plan, and the Old Arabi Revitalization Plan. The St. Bernard Port has invested over \$38 million in infrastructure improvements this year and kicked off the \$30 million reconstruction of the Chalmette Slip, which has been in operation for over 100 years. SBPG's Office of Community Development has been hard at work on the Parks Plan, with \$3.5 million invested into the acquisition, expansion, and renovation of parks throughout the parish. With an additional \$2 million award from the EDA's American Rescue Plan Act Economic Adjustment Assessment Grant, parish citizens will benefit from the construction of a North-South Connector Road, developed in partnership with SBEDF. Investments in the roads and bridges that keep our community accessible have totaled \$400,000, and SBEDF is proud to play a role in continuing that momentum.

## Community Acknowledgement

In 2021, five of our board members were named to Biz New Orleans' New Orleans 500 list for their outstanding impact on St. Bernard and the Greater New Orleans region. As with all our board members, we are proud to see their impact and are grateful for all the insight they provide our team throughout the year.

Drew Heaphy, Executive Director of the St. Bernard Port, Harbor, and Terminal District was recognized for his steadfast leadership and rapid business growth.

Kimberly Keene's efforts to increase quality outcomes, expand services, and enhance employee engagement were particularly notable, given the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mindy Nuñez Airhart with Southern Services and Equipment was recognized on Inc. Magazine's list of fastest growing private companies in the U.S. for two years in a row and continues to make strides in diversity and equity.

Dr. Tina Tinney was praised for her commitment to leadership and innovation at Nunez Community College, particularly with the rapid growth of workforce development programs offered.

Walter Leger Jr., of Leger and Shaw, was described as a "larger-than-life legal legend" who has played a pivotal role in many national class action cases.

## Workforce Development & Education

In 2021, SBEDF partnered with several organizations throughout the region to promote workforce development and educational initiatives in St. Bernard. Nunez Community College continues to expand its programs to support a diverse range of employer needs, offering one-day non-credit courses, two-week fast tracks, eight-week fast lanes, or regular 16-week full semesters. This year, Nunez piloted many innovative programs, including their Mechatronics Apprenticeship Program which leverages partnerships between Nunez, Delgado Community College, Northshore Technical Community College, Laitram, Zatarain's, and Elmer Chocolate to train and employ workers simultaneously. Programs like these ensure that employees have the skills they need to enter high-paying, in-demand jobs.

SBEDF has secured a \$20,000 grant from the Local Initiatives Support Coalition (Rural LISC) to develop a workforce development collaborative (WDC) in St. Bernard Parish. Launching in January of 2022, the St. Bernard WDC will provide a platform for educators, employers, developers, and non-profits to come together and coordinate efforts to improve workforce development initiatives and match people to educational and employment opportunities in the parish. This will not only strengthen collaboration but will increase the number of post-secondary career pathways available to residents in St. Bernard and the entire region, raising wages and creating prosperity.

In addition to post-secondary education initiatives, SBEDF has partnered with a variety of organizations that are creating career pathways and workforce experiences for high school and nontraditional students. In the summer of 2021, SBEDF hosted four interns from New Orleans public high schools through YouthForce NOLA. These interns gained real-world work experience and exposure to the field of economic development while strengthening soft skills such as communication, personal mindset, and time management. SBEDF has also developed a partnership with Take the Lead NOLA to employ people with disabilities in the parish and help employers receive support and incentives for doing so. Finally, SBEDF continues to work with Chalmette High School to bring programs such as Microsoft's TEALS computer science courses to CHS classrooms.



In 2021, Nunez Community College piloted a Mechatronics Apprenticeship Program.



**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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Chalmette, LA 70043



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