

# Annual Review 2022

**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



### IMPACT CHAMPIONS



### PARTNERS



### BUILDERS



### COMMUNITY COLLEAGUES

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

- |                                       |                       |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Caitrin Gladow                        | Kim Jones             |
| Chaffe McCall                         | Meaghan McCormack     |
| Clifford Reuther                      | Online Optimism       |
| Drew Heaphy                           | Ponstein's Food Store |
| Elizabeth Ellison Frost               | Sarah Alidor          |
| Frederick J. Sigur Investment Company | Sean Warner           |
| Jessica Daigle                        | TLC Realty            |
| Joseph DiFatta Jr.                    | Zeljko Franks         |

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# Letter from the Chief Executive Officer



Meaghan McCormack,  
Chief Executive Officer, SBEDF

2022 proved to be an outstanding year for St. Bernard Parish despite having experienced not one, but two tornados within 8 months. In conjunction with several local and regional organizations, our team was able to be on the ground within hours following these

disasters providing resources and information to residents and business owners to propel the cleanup and rebuilding process. Time and time again, the community members of St. Bernard Parish prove their resilience with the majority of businesses affected able to re-open their doors within the year. According to 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 continues to reflect the enormous potential on the horizon for continued growth and prosperity.

Providing support to businesses, employees, and non-profits who create jobs, build prosperity, and improve quality of life in St. Bernard is a top priority here at the St. Bernard Economic Development Foundation. In 2022, we were able to team up with several partners including Nunez Community College for the inception of a Wind Energy Curriculum which will put students in St. Bernard Parish at the forefront for a future in renewable energy. St. Bernard is overflowing with opportunities and being able to provide a stable economic ecosystem for our region is an important key to long-term success.

The programs hosted by SBEDF provide opportunities for community members and businesses alike to gather information, learn new skills, make connections, and move forward with business opportunities. Our Grow St. Bernard workshop series was able to issue the most BIPOC scholarships since the program's inception. The range of speakers at the second annual Small Business Matters Summit is a testament to the potential that is laid out here in St. Bernard Parish. Additionally, the continued success of the Startup St. Bernard pitch competition indicates the ability for businesses to flourish here while creating a platform to showcase everything this parish has to offer its business community.

The opportunities that lie ahead for 2023 excite us, knowing that we have the ability to expand our reach and continue to transform and expand the economic growth in our community. We have already made significant headway in utilizing a revitalization grant to make use of otherwise abandoned or underutilized sites throughout St. Bernard this year. Through the support of our investors, partners, board members, and community, the mission of the St. Bernard Economic Foundation is able to be carried out and for that we are deeply grateful.

With gratitude,

Meaghan McCormack  
Chief Executive Officer, SBEDF



# 2022 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 |  
Ochsner Health Systems*

**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.,  
At-Large/Past Chair**

*Leger & Shaw Attorneys and  
Counselors*

## Appointed Board Members

**Jason Stopa**

*St. Bernard Community  
Development*

**Howard Luna**

*St. Bernard Parish Councilmember*

**Tim Doody**

*Chaffe McCall*

**Katie Tommaseo**

*St. Bernard Parish Office of Tourism  
& Film*

**Al Claude**

*New Orleans Metropolitan  
Association of Realtors*

**Lisamarie Brandon**

*Rain Carbon | Rain CII*

**Ana Gale-Orellana**

*Entergy*

**Taryn M. Rogers**

*Valero Meraux Refinery*

**Elizabeth Ellison-Frost**

*PBF Energy | Chalmette Refinery*

**Rachel Nunez**

*Home Bank*

**Honorable Kim Jones**

*St. Bernard Parish Court House  
Division "C"*

## Honorary Members

**Superintendent Doris Voitier**

*St. Bernard Parish Public School  
Board*

**Diana Dysart**

*St. Bernard Parish Public School  
Board*

**James Pohlmann**

*St. Bernard Parish Sheriff's  
Department*

**Perry Nicosia**

*St. Bernard Parish District Attorney*

**Randy Nunez**

*Clerk of 34th Judicial District Court*

**Cullen Tonry**

*St. Bernard Bar Association*

**Kevin Reichert**

*St. Bernard Community Foundation*

**Jaylynn Turner**

*St. Bernard Parish Assessor*

**Representative Ray Garofalo**

*Louisiana House of Representatives*

**Senator Sharon Hewitt**

*Louisiana State Senate*

**Senator Joseph Bouie, Jr.**

*Louisiana State Senate*

**Robert Campo**

*Commercial Fisherman's  
Association*

# Programs



## Startup St. Bernard

Ceres, a plant protein cereal company was selected as the winner of the 8th annual Startup St. Bernard pitch competition. Startup St. Bernard was back in full swing at Docville Farm with all companies able to pitch their business plans live to our panel of judges and a full audience. While Ceres took home the grand prize of over \$100K in cash and in-kind services, we were proud to grant \$5,000 each for the two finalists: Crescent City Ninja Academy and Top Right Corner.

## Grow St. Bernard

Grow St. Bernard, powered by SBEDF and the St. Bernard Chamber of Commerce, took place in the fall of 2022. The six-part educational series provided valuable information to new, growing, and pre-revenue businesses and included sessions pertaining to creating business plans, marketing, disaster planning, customer service, ways to acquire business financing and business taxes. The program was well attended with a diverse group of business

owners and employees from industries including retail, medical, realty and non-profit. In addition, thanks to a grant from Entergy, we were able to offer 10 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.

## Small Business Matters

In November of 2022, SBEDF hosted the second annual 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.

# Business Development

## North-South Connector Road – \$2M

SBEDF assisted in writing the federal grant application and securing support from community leaders and elected officials for St. Bernard Parish Government to build a connector road to connect the St. Bernard Port, Harbor, and Terminal District to Judge Perez Drive. The Economic Development Administration awarded a \$2 million grant to provide access to St. Bernard Parish Hospital and nearby businesses that will encourage business growth and expansion. The project is expected to create 195 jobs, retain 390 jobs, and generate \$15M in private investment.

## CBS’ “Your Honor” – \$150K

For the first time since the implementation of the Film St. Bernard Tax Credit, the CBS film “Your Honor” was able to receive the full \$150K rebate. Based on this number, an estimated \$14M of qualifying purchases was spent locally. Competitive programs like this aim to attract additional productions to our area which in turn will create a multitude of jobs and business in the area.

## Complete Logistical Services Expansion – \$3.1M

Established in 2010, Complete Logistical Services (CLS) was founded by Spencer Sens as a maritime labor staffing company. The company has expanded to two offices in Chalmette and Lafayette. Today, the company has a team of staffing experts who place job seekers in multiple industries, including maritime, oil and gas, energy, manufacturing, offshore, plants, warehousing, engineering, IT, construction, office and admin job staffing, within the Gulf of Mexico and internationally. The expansion will include a 10,000

square foot building in Chalmette designed by local architect David Chautin and built by Campagna Construction, also local to St. Bernard. There are many planned and developing projects in St. Bernard’s pipeline, including Domino Sugar’s multi-million-dollar warehouse expansion, Chalmette Refinery’s plans to retrofit an idle unit of the plant and develop a renewable diesel unit, and the Port of New Orleans potential container terminal expansion, to name a few. Those businesses will need thousands of workers and CLS has the experience and tools to supply them. Having an established staffing agency in the parish will be crucial to ensure we connect our community members to those opportunities.

## Brownfields EPA Grant – \$500k

SBEDF was approved for a \$500K Brownfields EPA Grant that will allow for inspection and renovation to sites in St. Bernard Parish that have been contaminated, underutilized, or perceived by the community as such. Private, public, and non-profit organizations will be able to utilize these funds, making this a huge win for the entirety of the parish. Obtaining and utilizing grants such as these will open the door to more opportunities in the future.

## Glass Half Full to St. Bernard – \$5.6M

Glass Half Full, the 2021 Startup St. Bernard winner announces their proposed move into St. Bernard Parish. The glass recycling company that started in the backyard of two Tulane University students has flourished into a nationally recognized organization that produces recycled products used for coastal restoration projects, disaster relief efforts, eco-construction, new glass products and more. The new facility will sit on two acres of land and would be able to process over 320,000 pounds of glass per day. Within the first four years, the company expects to create 34 jobs.

*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.*



# Initiatives

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

## Disaster Relief

In March of 2022, residents and business owners in Arabi experienced a devastating tornado that uprooted their entire lives. In the days and weeks following the storm, SBEDF served as a resource for distributing timely information regarding community relief forces with the Greater New Orleans Foundation to provide \$10,000 in rapid response disaster grants to businesses affected by the disaster. This money was distributed in the form of \$1,000 grants to 10 businesses in Arabi to aid in their cleanup and rebuilding process.

## AmeriCorps

In 2022, SBEDF hosted a full-time AmeriCorps volunteer who served as 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 hosting more AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers in 2023.

## Institute for Environmental Communication

SBEDF CEO, Meaghan McCormack attended 10-week course that brought together a diverse group of citizens (environmentalists, scientists, journalists, industrialists, Brownfield specialists, politicians, government employees, teachers, business owners, and the like) to discuss issues of vital environmental importance to the region and nation. The IEC Program's working hypothesis is that if people who have different motivations meet and work together, they will come to understand others' perspectives and find it easier to work as a team.



## Wind Energy

In conjunction with several regional partners including Nunez Community College, SBEDF was able to be at the forefront of bringing the wind energy sector into St. Bernard. Through a partnership with Energy Innovation of Norway, the college was able to secure an MOU for a wind energy curriculum and training center for construction and maintenance of both on and offshore wind turbines. This program will allow local students to access this budding energy sector that is sure to create more economic opportunity and bring cleaner energy to our region.



# 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.**

## Film Incentive

In 2022, the film industry was able to take advantage of \$150,000 in tax rebates. This is the maximum amount that can be distributed annually in St. Bernard, which means production companies spent upwards of \$14M in order to receive the incentive. SBEDF serves on the Film Incentive Review Panel and at the end of 2022 the panel was able to gain approval from St. Bernard Parish Government to increase the incentive to \$200,000.

## Reinvesting in Shoreline Economies and Ecosystems Act (RISEE Act)

As a member of GNO, Inc.'s Coalition for Coastal Resilience and Economy (CCRE), and knowing the opportunity offshore wind can create for St. Bernard Parish, McCormack has been following RISEE Act developments closely. The bill would eliminate the state revenue-sharing cap in GOMESA and establish an offshore wind revenue-sharing model, sending 37.5% of revenues back to states, ultimately providing more revenue for coastal projects. Louisiana is projected to gain \$1.9B simply from lifting the GOMESA cap. CCRE has provided a letter of support to mark the bill's reintroduction in 2023 and advocate for urgent advancement.



# 2022 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 23%, 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 prosperity 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 2022, the St. Bernard Sheriff's Office reported 155 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.

## 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 or expand in St. Bernard. In 2022, SBEDF successfully partnered with over 10 companies to assist in their expansion efforts. Some notable business developments include Complete Logistical Services 10,000 square foot expansion, Domino's Sugar \$10M warehouse expansion,

Chalmette Refinery's renewable diesel project, and the Port of New Orleans' \$1.8B international container terminal. These are just some of the incredible businesses who opened their doors this year, with over 12 ribbon cuttings held for new businesses in the parish.

## 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.

## 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 2022, St. Bernard Parish Government invested nearly \$13 million on infrastructure improvements across the parish. This investment includes the development of several monumental projects such as the 40 Arpent bike and pedestrian trail, a brand-new library in Meraux, the Val Riess Splash Pad and many more. The St. Bernard Port has invested over \$60 million on the slip over the last 20 years and kicked off the \$35 million reconstruction of the Chalmette Slip, which has been in operation for over 100 years. Last year, \$5 million in the ASR building was invested. SBPG's Department 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.

## Workforce Development & Education

In 2022, 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 professional 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 Aerospace Manufacturing Technology program which leverages partnerships with industry leaders such as Boeing to train and employ workers simultaneously. Programs like these ensure that employees have the skills they need to enter high-paying, in-demand jobs.

In addition to post-secondary education initiatives, SBEDF has partnered with various organizations creating career pathways and workforce experiences for high school and nontraditional students. In the spring of 2022, SBEDF 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.

## Residential Construction

218 new residential construction permits were issued in 2022, 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.

## Community Acknowledgement

In 2022, four 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 in the region 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.

Dr. Tina Tinney was praised for her commitment to leadership and innovation at Nunez Community College, particularly for meeting the needs of students in an ever-changing environment.

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.

CEO, Meaghan McCormack was featured by New Orleans City Business' "Ones to Watch" series due to her efforts centering on business retention, expansion, and attraction, strategic neighborhood development, workforce development and marketing the parish to businesses, residents, and visitors.





**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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