

**St. John the Baptist Parish Business Training Center**

***Helping Businesses Grow and Prosper***

Summary of Activity and Business Impact – LSBDC GNOBR - July 2013 to April 2015

**About the LSBDC -** The mission of the LSBDC is to empower small business owners and entrepreneurs with the right tools, technical assistance, and resources to help their businesses start, grow, and succeed. LSBDC is a performance driven organization focused on providing high quality, professional assistance to small businesses with an emphasis expert on in-depth, outcome oriented consulting and training. In 2013, the LSBDC GNOBR was named the top Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in the nation, earning the U.S. Small Business Administration’s SBDC Excellence and Innovation Award, the highest award an SBDC can achieve.

**About the St. John the Baptist Parish Business Training Center -** 2015-2016 will be the third year of operation for the St. John the Baptist Parish Business Training Center. The Center is a partnership of St. John the Baptist Parish Economic Development, Louisiana Economic Development, Louisiana Small Business Development Center, and South Central Louisiana Technical College. The center is dedicated to the cultivation and development of entrepreneurs in St. John the Baptist Parish. Staffed by consultants from the LSBDC GNOBR, the Business Training Center provides entrepreneurial education, expert business advisors, and access to capital, to create sustainable businesses. The Business Training Center also provides information and resources from federal, state, and local government, and the private sector. Combined, these resources are designed to meet the specialized and complex needs of the small business community. Services available to the business owner include no cost consulting, free workshops and low cost entrepreneurial training. Through the St. John the Baptist Parish Business Training Center, small businesses in St. John Parish have easy access to these important business services in the parish where they live and work.

**St. John the Baptist Parish Business Training Center Staffing -** The LSBDC has continued to staff the Business Training Center at least three days per week. Businesses can contact the center by phone, email or in person. On-site staffing provided one- on-one consulting and business information for St. John residents and businesses both with and without an appointment. Workshops are held at the Training Center on specific business topics in addition to a 10 session entrepreneurial training program, now held twice each year.

**St. John the Baptist Parish Business assistance and follow up – July 2013 to April 2015 -** Since July 2013, over 300 St. John residents and businesses were assisted with business information, one-on-one assistance, and training. Through outreach and referrals, another 100 plus businesses were contacted and offered business assistance. Businesses assisted included a wide range of retail, wholesale, services, food and restaurants, start-ups, and existing businesses. Assistance has included start–up assistance, loan packaging, business planning, marketing, contracting strategies, business expansion strategies, and business recovery. St. John businesses also were provided information and access to other programs including two state wide business plan competitions, state incentives, and business certifications.

Businesses in St. John are assisted at every stage of their business with unlimited access to LSBDC consulting services. Topic specific and advanced training such as QuickBooks provides on-going support for businesses to expand and grow. Consulting provides in depth assistance to assist the owner with implementation of strategies to improve operations, grow and increase sustainability. Access to the Small & Emerging Business program with Louisiana Economic Development provides financial resources for businesses to participate in FastTrac, or develop a website/branding package or be trained on QuickBooks software (software included).

In addition, LSBDC partners with the River Region Chamber and attends St. John business organization events to further outreach efforts.

**Workshops -** Since July 2013, 16 workshops have been presented**.** Topics included starting a business, financing, marketing and internet branding strategies, business preparedness, government procurement and certifications**.** In addition, an 8 hour QuickBooks class has been completed, and an 8 hour QuickBooks class is scheduled for mid-May 2015. Also in May, 2015 a Workforce incentives workshop is scheduled.

**Entrepreneurial Training -** FastTrac is a nationally branded entrepreneurial training program developed by the Kauffman Foundation, a recognized leader in entrepreneurship. The FastTrac Program consisted of 10, three hour sessions, each session on a specific business topic. Each FastTrac graduate has their own workbooks, lifetime access to an online FastTrac Toolkit and unlimited follow-up assistance from the SBDC in implementing the business plan and growing the business. All business owners in the FastTrac program receive 30 hours of training, plus and one-on-one assistance. Twelve business owners have graduated from the FastTrac program. The current FastTrac program will graduate 24 business owners in May 2015.

**Impact and Results**

1. 310 businesses assisted with a total of 522 consulting sessions
2. 125 plus businesses offered assistance
3. Entrepreneurial Training Program completed by 12 business owners, currently 24 business owners are participating in the 3rd FastTrac program.
4. 16 Workshops presented, plus 8 hours of QuickBooks training.
5. $2,260,114 in Capitalization (loans approved/secured and investment)
6. 16 business plans completed + 24 plans at the end of the FastTrac class
7. Hosted a banker’s lunch n learn to encourage lending to small businesses in the parish
8. LSBDC and St. John will receive an award from Louisiana Economic Development on May 5, 2015 for innovation in creating a small business program in St. John the Baptist Parish.
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