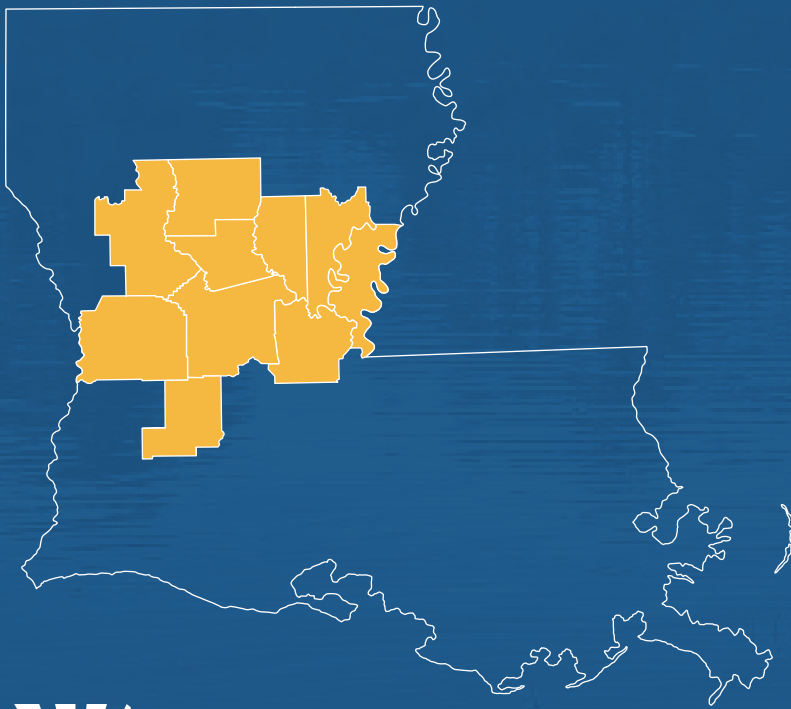


ELEVATE CENTRAL



ALLEN
AVOYELLES
CATAHOULA
CONCORDIA
GRANT
LASALLE
NATCHITOCHEs
RAPIDES
VERNON
WINN



LOUISIANA CENTRAL
STRATEGIC PLAN

2026 - 2030 | MARCH 2026



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LETTER FROM THE CEO AND THE CHAIR

To our partners, stakeholders, and communities:

Central Louisiana is at an inflection point. The communities that make up our ten-parish region, each with its own history, identity, and character, share a common perspective: that the people of Central Louisiana deserve an economy worthy of their ambition, one that expands good-paying, skilled jobs and the opportunity for our children and grandchildren to build their futures right here, close to home.

That perspective is one that we heard dozens, if not hundreds, of times on the road. Over the course of developing this strategic plan, our team traveled more than 1,300 miles across 70 stops in all ten parishes, connecting with more than 700 business and community leaders, educators, workers, and residents in facilitated listening sessions designed to hear directly from the people who know this region best. Time and again, we heard the same message: Central Louisiana has real strengths, real assets, and real potential, and what it needs is a focused, aligned, coordinated effort to turn that potential into prosperity.

The foundation is already here. Legacy industries in manufacturing, healthcare, agribusiness and wood products, energy, transportation and logistics, and aerospace and defense have sustained our region for generations. World-class educational institutions, like Louisiana State University of Alexandria, Louisiana Christian University, Northwestern State University, and Central Louisiana Technical Community College, are developing the talent pipeline our employers need.

Fort Polk and England Airpark anchor a defense and aerospace cluster with growing national significance. Certified industrial sites and Class I rail connectivity give us the infrastructure to compete. This plan is built upon that foundation, and it is designed to elevate it.

The strategic plan you are reading is organized around four pillars:

- **Organizational Excellence:** Transforming Louisiana Central to become a top performing regional economic development organization in Louisiana;
- **Economic Development:** Expanding business investment and job opportunity through recruitment, retention, and expansion;
- **Strategic Initiatives & Partnerships:** Serving as the go-to resource and subject matter expert for parishes, businesses, and community leaders across the region; and
- **Marketing and Communications:** Elevating the Central Louisiana narrative with consistent, positive, and transparent storytelling that reflects the true character of our region.

This plan aligns directly with Louisiana's statewide economic development strategy, and we are committed to ensuring that Central Louisiana not only participates in the state's growth—we want to lead it. The priorities in this document reflect the voices of the hundreds of stakeholders who gave us their time and their trust, and we take that seriously. This plan is a call to action that will not simply sit on a shelf.

As leadership of Louisiana Central, we believe that our region's best days are ahead. With a new President & CEO, expanded staff capacity and expertise, and a renewed focus on our core mission, we will build an economy together that gives every family in every parish a reason to stay, to invest, and to grow right here at home. We invite you to join us.

With resolve, determination, and regional pride,



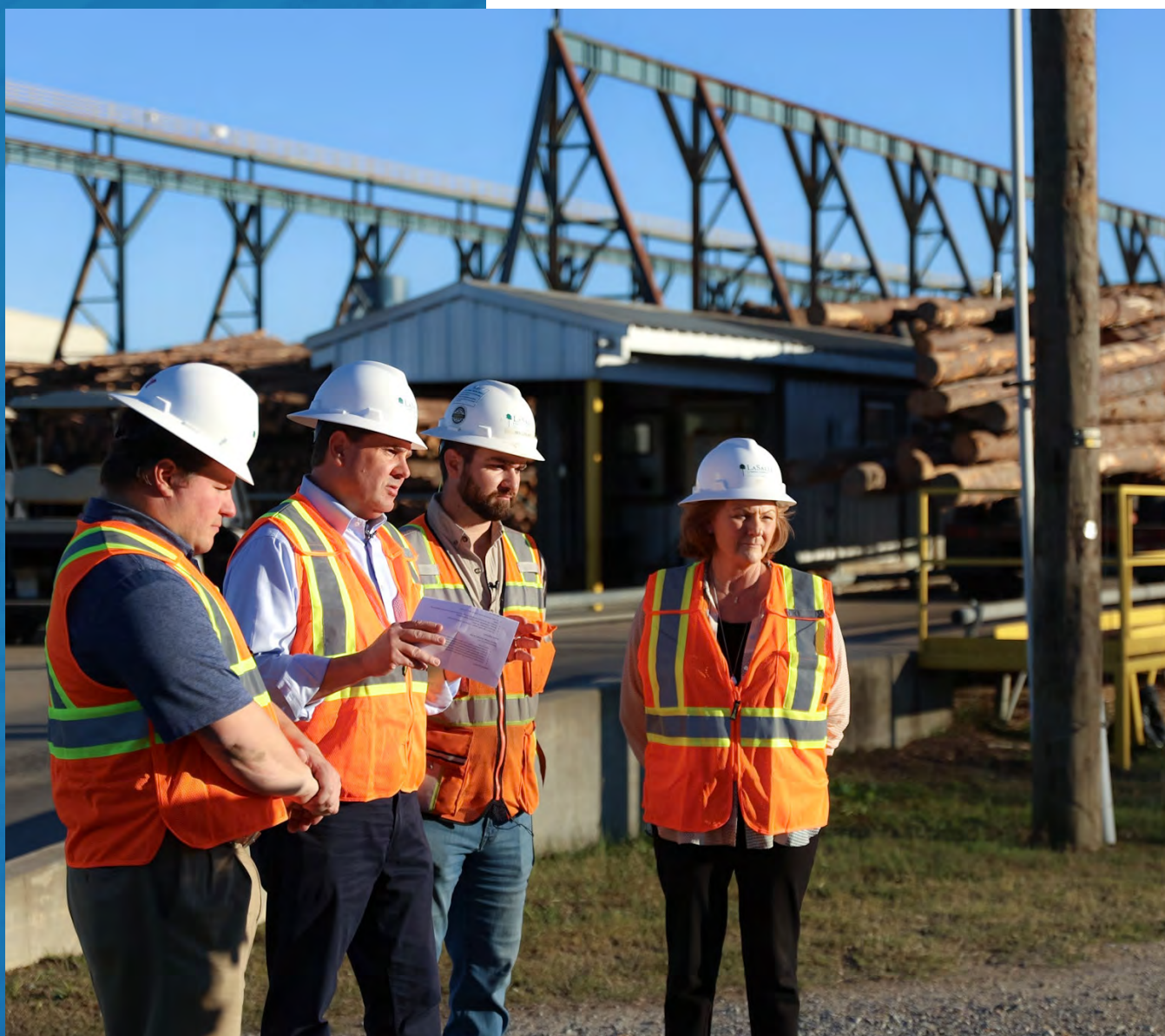
CHRIS MASINGILL
President and Chief
Executive Officer



BLAKE CHATELAIN
Board Chair

WHO WE ARE

Louisiana Central is the state-designated Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) for the ten-parish region of Central Louisiana – serving Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon, and Winn parishes. We lead and coordinate economic development across the region, advancing business retention and expansion, workforce development, entrepreneurship, and community competitiveness to strengthen regional performance, attract investment, and drive long-term prosperity.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Central Louisiana is ready to elevate its impact, opportunity, and investment – this is not only an opportunity for our region, but a necessity demanded by the people and businesses of our ten-parish region. This strategic plan provides a clear roadmap and direction for how we do so. While our economy has continued to grow and job numbers have rebounded, the region's full potential remains unrealized. This plan is designed to close the gap between where we are today and where we can be, working toward a vibrant, prosperous economy for each of our parishes and communities across the region.

We have set ambitious goals for Central Louisiana's economy and are putting forward a bold set of strategies.

These strategies will only succeed through intentional collaboration and a strong commitment to execution. Economic development does not happen in isolation. While we are focused on business investment and job creation and retention, we also recognize that our region's competitiveness depends on strong quality of life and community attractiveness.

Looking ahead, our success will be measured by how effectively we execute the strategies in this plan, with accountability tied to their implementation. We believe this work will drive meaningful results for our economy. While investment decisions ultimately rest with companies, we are responsible for creating the competitive conditions that attract investment and support sustainable growth. We must still participate in aggressive lead generation efforts and leverage best-in-class economic development and community-building practices. We cannot control outcomes – but we do influence them.

We do have aspirational goals for the potential impact of this work. From 2019 to 2024, Central Louisiana's gross regional product grew by nearly 30%.

Through focused execution of this plan, we hope to see GRP increase by 40% over the next five years, reflecting the potential of our region and coordinated actions.

This work will be driven by several high-impact priorities designed to expand opportunity and position our region for long-term competitiveness and success.

Through our economic development pillar, we will launch more targeted and aggressive business attraction, retention, and expansion efforts to compete more effectively for investment and job creation. This revitalized focus will be guided by proactive outreach and coordinated analysis and pursuit of new opportunities across the region. We will strategically position Central Louisiana for site selection and investment – we know our region's assets are highly competitive, and we will ensure the world sees it too. Increasing our region's labor force participation is a core focus of ours to enable this growth, working to ensure that employers have access to talent and that residents are connected to opportunity. Workforce and community development are critical components of this pillar. Economic competitiveness is anchored by community attractiveness and talent availability. Small businesses are central to the strength of Central Louisiana's economy and the vitality and competitiveness of our communities. We will expand and better align existing support while intentionally assessing gaps and opportunities within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This includes strengthening the region's capacity to support high-growth and innovation-driven startups through enhanced programming, access to capital, and targeted funding pathways.



Our three other integrated strategic pillars – Organizational Excellence, Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships, and Marketing and Engagement – allow us to elevate Central Louisiana’s economy through targeted and interconnected strategies.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

We are elevating our organization to perform at the highest level: We have a bold and ambitious plan for the future of our regional economy. In order to make this plan possible and help achieve our collective goals, we must scale and strengthen our Louisiana Central organization. This includes modernizing our organization to effectively operate and compete in a 21st century economic landscape; adding staff capacity and expanding our resource base to deliver a comprehensive set of programs and services that contribute meaningfully to our communities; and redefining and repositioning our brand as a regional economic development organization that serves all ten parishes in our region. Through these efforts, we are focused on turning Louisiana Central into a top regional economic development organization in Louisiana – one that is known for its community connectedness, proactive engagement, aggressive pursuit of opportunity, and innovation in constantly rising to meet the needs of the communities of Central Louisiana.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND INITIATIVES

We are enhancing and deepening our partnerships through coordinated action and accountability: Our region cannot reach its full potential if we are working in isolation. As an organization that exists to serve all ten parishes in Central Louisiana, we are committed to maintaining a strong presence across the entire region; deepening engagement with our existing partners while proactively working to connect with new leaders and stakeholders; building capacity among our partners to jointly pursue economic development opportunities; and expanding existing programs or launching new initiatives designed to help achieve our goals for regional economic growth. By doing so, we will strengthen our regional economic development ecosystem and foster coordinated action to accelerate growth. Our goal is to serve as the “go-to” economic development resource hub, providing leadership and subject matter expertise for parishes, business and community leaders, and stakeholders across the region.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

We are amplifying our communication to elevate the region’s story: We have heard clearly that in order to effectively grow our Central Louisiana economy, we must present and talk about our regional economy with a renewed sense of energy, excitement, and positivity – reflecting all of the wonderful, unique characteristics of our communities that make it an ideal place for investment. Our digital presence will be revitalized, and we will be intentional about elevating the countless success stories across our region. We will expand and strengthen our value proposition and champion the community development and quality-of-place efforts that reinforce our position as a region where people want to live, work, and play. Our goal is to own the Central Louisiana story, revitalizing our regional narrative through consistent, positive, and transparent communications in a way that drives positive, sustained economic growth.



The planning process that informed this strategic plan was grounded in a rigorous, data-informed assessment of the regional economic landscape – our assets, workforce, and industry specializations. A central component of this analysis was identifying target sectors tailored to the region’s unique strengths while remaining strongly aligned with statewide priorities. At the foundation of all of our work, the Manufacturing and Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics sectors emerged as our region’s major economic drivers and cross-cutting sectors that power our regional economy. While not a standalone sector, innovation remains a top priority for Louisiana Central. Its importance continues to grow across our state and the country, and it is increasingly a common thread across our target sectors. Many of our most enduring legacy businesses have succeeded because they embraced innovation – adapting new practices and technologies to evolve with changing markets and landscapes.

Manufacturing is the engine of our regional economy and an enabler across nearly all of our dominant growth industries. Central Louisiana already serves as a manufacturing corridor for the state; this industry will only continue to be a critical source of opportunity and growth for the region. The Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics sector similarly serves as a key enabler across sectors. Located at the center of the state, the region is supported by a robust, multimodal infrastructure network that includes England Airpark and Alexandria International Airport, three inland ports, Class I rail access, and Interstate 49.

Other key sectors we will focus on as fundamental to our region’s economic success in the coming years include the following, with each intentionally identified to balance strengthening what the region already does well with capturing emerging industries and responding to evolving market shifts.

AGRIBUSINESS AND WOOD PRODUCTS

Agribusiness and Wood Products is a legacy industry for Central Louisiana, where the region holds deep specialization and a strong competitive advantage. Supported by abundant natural resources and standout export performance, Central Louisiana is building on its outsized industry concentration to strengthen its timber, wood products manufacturing, and agricultural base – supporting continued growth while exploring expansion across the value chain.

ENERGY

Energy reflects clear alignment with the state’s “all-of-the-above” energy strategy. We will leverage our legacy strengths and competitive infrastructure in the region to attract new opportunities in next generation energy production, while pairing this sector with existing capabilities to explore growth in biofuels and renewable energy.

AEROSPACE AND DEFENSE

Aerospace and Defense is driven by the rare combination of Fort Polk’s Joint Readiness Training Center, its innovation, research, and testing opportunity, and England Airpark’s aviation and industrial capacity. Together, combined with a robust education and training pipeline and increased federal focus on unmanned aerial system (UAS) technologies, these assets lay the groundwork for the pursuit of new business in high-wage defense contracting; maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) operations; UAS technologies, and advanced manufacturing.

HEALTHCARE

Healthcare is one of the region’s largest and most stable employment sectors. While not a traditional tradable sector, healthcare organizations across the region provide significant opportunity for residents and are essential to quality of life, including the region’s ongoing ability to attract and retain top talent. This necessitates a dedicated focus and a deliberate strategy centered on supporting healthcare providers and building the workforce required to sustain and grow healthcare options for current and future residents.

With this plan in place, we are rapidly moving into implementation and aggressively working to elevate both the Central Louisiana economy and all we do to support our ten-parish region. We invite our partners to join us in this process as we work to build a vibrant, high-performing economy across Central Louisiana for today and the years to come.

INTRODUCTION

Louisiana Central serves as the state designated official regional economic development organization (REDO) for the ten-parish region in Central Louisiana, supporting and coordinating across Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon, and Winn parishes.

In late 2025, we began a process to develop a new strategic plan for both our organization and the broader Central Louisiana economy. This point in time presented a unique opportunity for our region. With a new CEO joining Louisiana Central in July 2025, we entered a new chapter marked by renewed energy, focus, and momentum. This momentum for economic development in our region aligns with a broader shift at the state level.

Louisiana is at a pivotal point for economic development, marked by the March 2025 launch of Louisiana Economic Development's (LED) statewide strategic plan, Positioning Louisiana to Win. Key to this framework is a whole-of-government approach that emphasizes partnership, alignment, and regional leadership. In that spirit, LED is a key partner to Louisiana Central in driving growth and competitiveness across Central Louisiana, positioning the region to play a meaningful role in the state's long-term economic success. The statewide plan outlines five core pillars of prosperity aimed at strengthening Louisiana's

competitiveness and overall economic position, along with seven target sectors where the state is best positioned to grow and lead. Since January 2024, the state has announced over \$70 billion in investments for new projects. This significant momentum at the state level not only signals a new day for economic growth across Louisiana but also provides a clear framework for how we can align our region's assets and seize related opportunities for our ten parishes.

Following the launch of this statewide plan, Louisiana Central set a course to develop a plan and roadmap for Central Louisiana that would align with the state's bold trajectory and elevate the economic performance of all 10 parishes that comprise this region.

In October 2025, Louisiana Central launched the "We Make Good Stuff" roadshow, visiting all 10 parishes in the region with dozens of meetings and input from nearly 700 leaders, business owners, elected officials, and community members to inform this planning process. The roadshow was designed to gather direct input from key stakeholders on opportunities for Central Louisiana's economy, key priorities and goals, ideal areas of focus, potential challenges, and significant assets in each parish upon which the region can build in the coming years. In each parish, strategic planning listening sessions included facilitated discussions on these topics and captured feedback from community members. In parallel, a regional community survey, launched at

LED'S FIVE PILLARS OF PROSPERITY

Ease of Doing Business

Position Louisiana to compete and win by making it the easiest and best place to do business

High Wage Employment

Ensure every Louisianan has the opportunity for proud and ever-growing wages

Thriving Regions

Create thriving regions that are continually capitalizing on opportunities

Growth and Innovation

Optimize Louisiana's asset industries for growth and innovation to lead in the future

Global Impact

Drive Louisiana's business ecosystem towards global impact

the September 2025 Rapides Foundation Symposium, provided an additional avenue for stakeholders across the region to share anonymous feedback on the future of the Central Louisiana economy, ensuring perspectives from as many voices as possible contributed to this process. This engagement was further supplemented by dozens of one-on-one and small group interviews with business and community leaders across the region to explore potential opportunities in depth and better understand regional strengths and weaknesses.

In addition to in-depth stakeholder engagement, this plan was heavily informed by robust desk research and data analysis. A comprehensive regional analysis surfaced the distinctive strengths, trends, and challenges shaping economic opportunity across Central Louisiana, supported by federal and state datasets, data maintained by Louisiana Central, and other official data sources. These data provided crucial insights into industries, jobs, wages, regional patterns, and trends over time to highlight competitive advantages, key regional differentiators, emerging industry trends, and barriers to success. This analysis also included a review of regional strengths, challenges, and strategic considerations essential to shaping the future of Louisiana Central, both organizationally and operationally, along with a comprehensive analysis of peer and aspirational organizations to provide a framework and benchmark for our organization rooted in best practices for regional economic development.

Central Louisiana is home to numerous high-quality assets – industries, institutions, infrastructure, and people – that are well positioned to catalyze economic growth. To fully realize this potential, these assets must be activated intentionally and strategically. Central Louisiana has both the opportunity and imperative to come together as a more connected and collaborative region; as such, we are leveraging this opportunity to develop a truly regional strategic plan built around shared priorities, coordinated action, and collective impact.

This plan lays the foundation for Central Louisiana's economic future, with key priorities and focus areas along with the most crucial strategies that will drive this success and goals and metrics upon which our success can and should be measured. Collectively, these elements provide a clear roadmap to guide action, align resources, and advance our region's growth. By focusing on what matters most, this plan will enable us to elevate Central Louisiana, strengthen our communities, and position the entire region for long-term economic prosperity.

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Our mission guides our daily work and shapes Louisiana Central's identity, defining our core purpose and why we exist. Our vision sets a long-term direction, looking ahead to the future impact we aspire to achieve.

MISSION

To grow the economy, champion our people, and build on our collective strengths to shape a region where individuals, businesses, and communities can grow and prosper together.

VISION

Our vision is to elevate Central Louisiana by leading and transforming our region into a hub of opportunity and community growth.



VALUES

We are community-focused in purpose and practice, working to elevate our economy, and committed to being excellent in all we do. We lead with impact and hold ourselves accountable to those who place their trust in us.

Community-focused

Elevate

Number 1

Leadership

Accountable

- **Community-focused:** We are deeply engaged across our ten-parish region, actively listening, learning, and responding to needs.
- **Elevate:** We uplift, strengthen, and expand all aspects of our work, raising all initiatives and partnerships to higher levels of impact.
- **Number 1:** We are best in class in everything we do, positioning our organization, region, and economy as a top-tier and highly competitive example of success.
- **Leadership:** We provide thought leadership and coordination for our partners, setting a clear path forward and uniting our region around shared economic goals.
- **Accountable:** We are transparent in our work and priorities, delivering results with integrity and holding ourselves responsible for our performance.

REGIONAL OVERVIEW AND ASSETS

OUR REGION AT A GLANCE

342,647

POPULATION (2024)

12.5%

BACHELOR'S DEGREE ATTAINMENT

144,714

JOBS (2024)

7.1%

GRADUATE DEGREE ATTAINMENT

36.2

MEDIAN AGE (2024)

4.1%

UNEMPLOYMENT (APRIL 2025)

\$50,454

MEDIAN INCOME (2024)

56.1%

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION
(APRIL 2025)

\$59,168

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE (2024)

\$15,496,993,452

REGIONAL GRP (2024)

19,273

TALENT PIPELINE (ENROLLED COLLEGE
& UNIVERSITY STUDENTS 2023)

\$58,832,988,146

REGIONAL EXPORTS (2024)

95.8

REGIONAL COST OF LIVING INDEX
(NATIONAL AVERAGE = 100)

96.3%

SHARE OF BUSINESSES WITH
FEWER THAN 50 EMPLOYEES

POPULATION AND WORKFORCE REVIEW

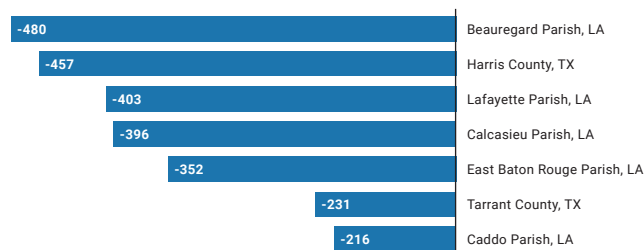
The Central Louisiana Region – Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon, and Winn parishes – has a total population of 342,647 (2024). The region's population anchor is Rapides Parish, with 36.6% of the total population (125,379). Population has declined by 5.4% since 2019 and is projected to fall by an additional 3.9% by 2029. From 2019 to 2024, the region saw a minor increase in jobs, from 144,693 to 144,714. While the overall job change from 2019 to 2024 is slightly negative, jobs have seen a strong recovery since their decline in 2020 – in line with national trends. Additionally, jobs are projected to grow through 2029, which both restores and bypasses 2019 employment levels. However, job projections continue to lag national growth projections by over 2%.

PARISH	POPULATION	JOBS
Catahoula	8,328	2,734
Winn	13,164	4,921
LaSalle	14,864	5,210
Concordia	17,385	6,143
Allen	21,707	8,147
Grant	21,859	4,151
Natchitoches	35,963	16,395
Avoyelles	38,101	11,544
Vernon	45,897	21,963
Rapides	125,379	63,508
Total	342,647	144,714

Outmigration remains a key challenge for the region, with annual net losses between 2,341 and 4,236 residents from 2017–2022. However, the degree of loss has begun to moderate, with the largest losses in 2017 (-4,236) – suggesting a slight improvement in retaining residents or attracting new individuals. Harris County, TX is increasingly both a top inbound and top outbound location for residents, reflecting high mobility between Central Louisiana and Houston. Harris County, TX, Dallas County, TX, and East Baton Rouge Parish are frequent top outbound destinations, signaling persistent outflow toward Texas and the Baton Rouge area. Beauregard and

Calcasieu Parishes are some of the region's top inbound locations across all years, representing strong pipelines within the state for new talent relocating to the region.

OUTMIGRATION BY PARISH AND COUNTY, 2022



Stakeholders consistently identify brain drain and talent retention as key economic barriers, with the retention of existing residents just as critical as attracting new ones.

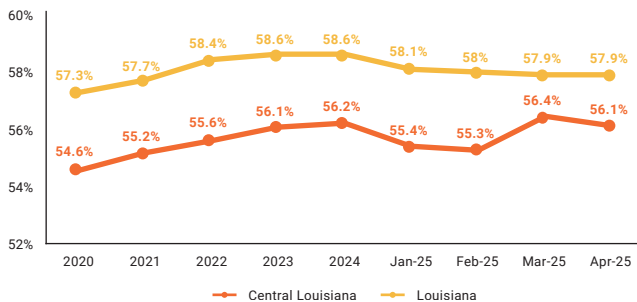
Often, unemployment rate serves as the traditional metric for the strength of the labor market; in April 2025, the region's unemployment rate was 4.1%. However, the labor force participation rate (LFPR) provides a more complete picture of workforce engagement than unemployment alone. This metric includes the percentage of population over the age of 16 participating in the workforce, while the unemployment rate only reflects those who are actively looking for a job and are unemployed. In April 2025, Central Louisiana's labor force participation rate was 56.1% - meaning 44 out of 100 potential labor force participants are not in the workforce. Since 2020, the region's LFPR has trailed the state rate by at least 1.5 percentage points³. While the region's unemployment rate has been relatively stable, the lower participation rate suggests a significant pool of potential workers who are currently disengaged from the economy.

³ Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. (2025, December 29). Labor Force Participation Rate for Louisiana (LBSNSA22). FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

POPULATION AND WORKFORCE REVIEW

These patterns, along with employers frequently highlighting challenges in filling available entry-level positions, reinforce two clear strategies fundamental to the success of the regional economy: there must be greater alignment and coordination among eligible workers and employers, and there must be an intentional, region-wide effort to address barriers associated with workforce participation – from childcare and transportation to skills alignment and educational attainment.

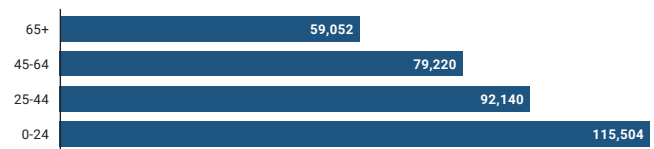
REGIONAL AND STATE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES, 2020 - APRIL 2025



Most of the region's population falls within the working-age range of 24 to 64, forming the backbone of the regional economy. Within this group, a distinct advantage is the relative size of the younger, core workforce aged 24 to 44 (92,140 individuals). This cohort is larger than the population of later-stage workers over age 45 – our region has a built-in pipeline to replace workers as more experienced employees retire or transition out of the workforce⁴. The population base needed to sustain and grow the region's labor force is already here, but our challenge and opportunity is keeping this talent in the region and ensuring they are prepared to step into higher-skill, higher-wage roles. Unlocking this advantage will require focused efforts to connect our

younger workforce with the educational opportunities, credentials, and skills that align with employer demand and support long-term economic growth.

CENTRAL LOUISIANA POPULATION (2025) BY AGE

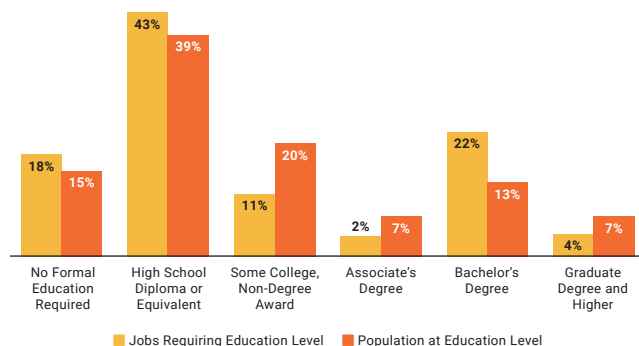


The workforce ready population in Central Louisiana exists already. The key to unlocking growth is ensuring our current residents have the education, skills, and wraparound support needed to seamlessly enter the job market and serve as active participants in our shared economic success.

The Central Louisiana workforce is characterized by strong institutional training partners but also by significant gaps in educational attainment and participation that threaten future growth. A critical challenge for Central Louisiana is the talent gap between the education level of the current population and the requirements of available jobs. While 22% of regional jobs require a bachelor's degree, only 13% of the population holds one – a 9% deficit. Conversely, there is a surplus of individuals with "Some College or Non-Degree Awards" (20% of the population vs. 11% required) and associate's degrees (7% of the population vs. 2% required). Attainment of bachelor's degrees is 9% below national averages, and attainment of associate degrees is 1.7% below national averages. Low attainment rates cause workforce shortages in the region, which has more jobs requiring associate and bachelor's degrees than individuals with associate or bachelor's degrees, and more individuals below a high school diploma than jobs at that level. In 2023, individuals with bachelor's degrees or higher were the most likely to leave the state. Shortages of bachelor's degree candidates could worsen with continued population decline and threaten growth in key sectors.

⁴ Applied Geographic Solutions. (2024); FT Locations. (2024). Location intelligence and tax burden research; Tax Foundation. (2021). State and local tax burden data.

CENTRAL LOUISIANA REGION, EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND JOB REQUIREMENTS



Despite demographic headwinds, the regional job market has shown resilience; while job growth of 0.2% lagged the national average by over 4% between 2019 and 2024, manufacturing and energy investments are positioning the region for potentially its best economic forecast in 25 years.

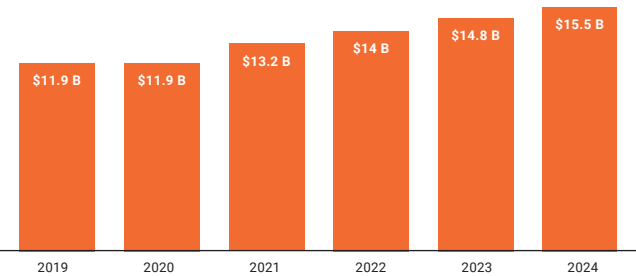


INDUSTRY AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

ECONOMY OVERVIEW

Gross Regional Product (GRP) – the measure of all economic activity in the region, similar to GDP at the national level – has been growing steadily since 2019, increasing from \$11.9 billion to \$15.5 billion in 2024 (+29.8%). While this growth is significant, and higher than many other regions in the state, it still trails national growth by 6%.

CENTRAL LOUISIANA GRP (2019-24)



In 2024, the top contributing sectors included government (\$4.4 billion), manufacturing (\$1.8 billion), health care and social assistance (\$1.5 billion), retail trade (\$1.3 billion), and accommodation and food services (\$1.3 billion).

Top employing sectors generally mirror the region’s leaders in GRP, with the largest job totals seen in government (41,861), health care (21,971), retail (15,147), accommodation & food services (10,069), and manufacturing (10,007).

While service sectors dominate employment, these wages are often below national and regional averages. However, this does not limit the economic impact of government employers – school systems, municipal, state, and federal offices – or healthcare organizations like hospitals and medical centers. These organizations are often among the largest employers and form the foundation of a community’s economy – true nationally, but especially so in rural parishes.

Manufacturing and utilities – two sectors with high average wages (\$81,292 and \$113,442, respectively) provide ample opportunity for workforce advancement and investment attraction. Agriculture, while not highest in GRP contributions or jobs, is also a foundational sector with high employment concentration and overall job growth contributions (+9% since 2019). The utilities sector is another that, while not currently among the highest jobs or GRP contributors, has seen notable job growth (+ 9% since 2019) and high overall wages (\$113,442), providing additional opportunities for growth in steady, high-wage jobs. The fossil fuel power generation industry has also been a key driver of the growth and job share in the utilities sector (+42% since 2019, representing 29.3% of utilities jobs).

SECTOR	2024 GRP
Government	\$4,392,031,136
Manufacturing	\$1,858,999,053
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$1,510,115,462
Retail Trade	\$1,318,320,191
Construction	\$743,019,979

SECTOR	2024 JOBS
Government	41,861
Health Care & Social Assistance	21,971
Retail Trade	15,147
Accommodation & Food Services	10,069
Manufacturing	10,007

EXPORT INDUSTRIES

Central Louisiana’s tradable sectors are a cornerstone of regional economic growth – bringing external dollars into the economy and creating high-value employment opportunities. The region’s export economy is driven by its rich natural resource base, specialized manufacturing, and value-added production.

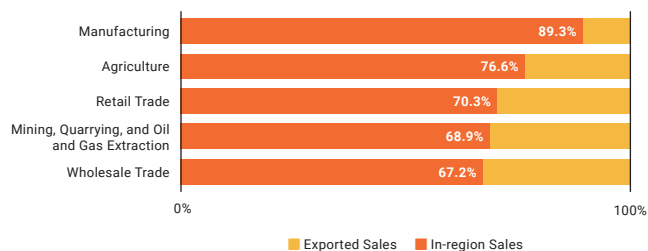
Agribusiness, Forestry, and Wood Products form the backbone of Central Louisiana's export economy. Wood product manufacturing alone accounts for over \$1.5 billion in exported sales, representing nearly 90% of total industry output. This includes Hardwood Veneer and Plywood Manufacturing (\$263 million exported, 94% of sales) and Softwood Veneer and Plywood Manufacturing (\$560 million exported, 94% of sales). Crop production (\$523 million in exports) and animal production (\$286 million) further bolster the region's external revenue, while the forestry and agribusiness sectors together position Central Louisiana as the state's preeminent "wood basket."

Much of this demand is met locally, underscoring the region's ability to capture value from its natural resources while generating high-wage employment and export revenue. Paper manufacturing is another critical export driver, generating \$455 million in exported sales (98.7% of output), but is heavily reliant on out-of-region inputs. Food manufacturing (\$328 million) also demonstrates high external sales, coupled with high external demand (over 90% of demand met out-of-region). Collectively, these sectors create robust, high-paying employment opportunities, with jobs ranging from 542 in paper manufacturing to 4,130 in wood product manufacturing.

The chemicals, energy, and advanced materials industries are critical pillars of the region's export economy, generating high-value output and supporting a specialized workforce with high-wages. Chemical manufacturing contributes \$683 million in exported sales, led by soap and other detergent manufacturing (\$460 million), with 93% of production sold outside the region. This subsector is heavily dependent on imported inputs (over 92% of demand met out-of-region), reflecting both its integration into global supply chains and potential opportunities to expand local supplier networks.

The energy and utilities sectors, led by fossil fuel electric power generation, electric power distribution, and pipeline transportation of natural gas, are standouts in both earnings and employment concentration. Average wages in these industries range from \$120,000-\$150,000, with employment concentrations starting at 1.5 times the national average, reflecting the region's deep technical expertise and operational specialization.

Ongoing modernization has increased national demand for data, controls, and operations talent, positioning Central Louisiana as a potential hub for advanced energy production. Advanced materials and specialty chemicals complement these sectors. While total employment is modest relative to wood products or energy, these subsectors show high employment concentration, above-average wages, and strong export orientation. Emerging national trends in sustainable materials, process efficiency, and integration with aerospace, agriculture, and energy supply chains provide opportunities for expansion. By leveraging process-technology expertise and maintenance specialization, Central Louisiana can scale these industries, strengthen adjacent workforce pipelines, and reinforce its position as a competitive, export-driven economy.



INDUSTRY AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Median household income in the region trails the state; Central Louisiana’s 2024 median household income (\$50,454) is about \$10,000 below the Louisiana average (\$60,986). Per capita income levels also vary across the region. Rapides Parish leads with \$56,169 in per capita earnings, followed by Natchitoches and Vernon (each exceeding \$50,000). Poverty rates in the region follow a similar pattern, with only Rapides and Vernon parishes seeing more favorable rates (both below the statewide poverty rate of 18.9%)³.

2024 MEDIAN INCOME



REGIONAL ECONOMIC CLUSTERS

Clusters measure the strength of related industries by examining employment concentration, interconnections, and performance relative to national benchmarks. Rather than viewing industries in isolation, clusters reveal networks of skills, supply chains, and technologies that create a region’s competitive advantage.

In Central Louisiana, several clusters stand out as anchors for economic growth and opportunity: wood products, chemicals, advanced materials, energy, and utilities, all of which hold specialized workforces, high wages, and strong export orientation – creating significant competitive advantages. These clusters leverage the region’s natural resources, established supply chains, and institutional training, providing a foundation for scaling growth, attracting investment, and aligning workforce pipelines with high-demand industries.

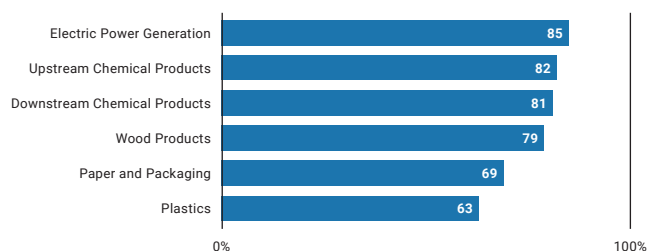
Wood products and paper manufacturing remain the region’s most established clusters. Central Louisiana’s workforce possesses deep specialization across hardwood and softwood veneer and plywood, engineered wood products, and paper manufacturing, supported by a robust local infrastructure and resource base. The region exports a substantial share of products in these industries, underscoring its national and international competitiveness. Highly specialized labor, supported by technical training and local institutions, positions Central Louisiana to scale these operations efficiently in the coming years. Additionally, national demand for wood products is projected to grow at 2.7% annually through 2032, driven by commercial, residential, and infrastructure construction requiring sustainable, durable, and customizable materials⁴. Historically, the U.S. has been a net importer of timber as domestic mills struggled to compete on cost with foreign lumber. To address these challenges, the federal government recently implemented a duty on lumber – an action that creates a key opportunity for Central Louisiana’s timber companies to reclaim market share, modernize facilities, and help stabilize the domestic supply chain. This cluster represents not only a foundation of economic activity but also a platform for innovation in sustainable materials, advanced manufacturing processes, and downstream product development.

3 U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). Poverty in the United States: 2024 (P60-283). U.S. Department of Commerce.

4 Fortune Business Insights. (2024). Wood and timber products market size, share & report, 2032 forecast. Fortune Business Insights.

The chemical and advanced materials cluster, while smaller in employment than wood products, provides high-value, export-oriented opportunities. The cluster includes specialty materials, industrial gases, and chemical process industries closely linked to agriculture, aerospace, and advanced manufacturing. The region has a concentration of process technology and maintenance expertise, forming a scalable platform for industry growth. Expansion in this cluster could strengthen workforce pipelines, deepen supply chains, and drive high-wage employment growth while supporting adjacent sectors like manufacturing, aerospace, and energy. Although job numbers are modest, this cluster is critical for establishing Central Louisiana as a hub for high-skill, export-oriented manufacturing and for leveraging innovation across multiple sectors.

Energy and utilities represent one of the region's highest-paying and most specialized clusters, anchored by fossil fuel electric power generation, electric power distribution, and pipeline transportation. The fossil fuel and electric power generation industry alone contributed over \$156 million to the region's GRP in 2024. Regional average earnings in this cluster exceed \$136,000, reflecting the high technical skill requirements and specialized labor pools⁵.



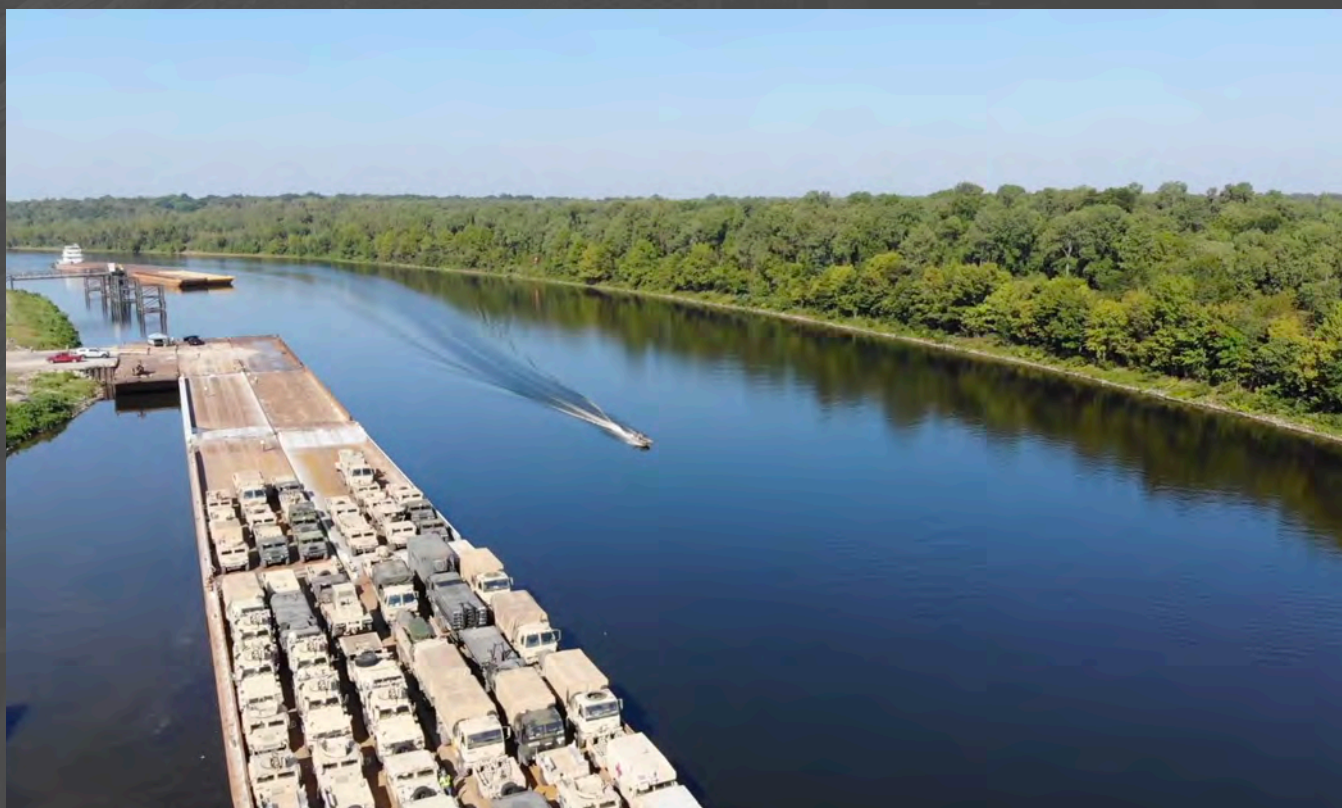
The Central Louisiana economy is poised for growth, but success will not be achieved without action. We must think differently about our legacy strengths and assets, leveraging historical success in manufacturing, healthcare, energy, and wood products while also investing in emerging opportunities. We can position our region to lead in new, high-value industries, reinforcing Louisiana Central as a state and national leader.

⁵ Lightcast. 2024.

TARGET SECTORS

As part of this regional economic development strategic planning process, we conducted a rigorous analysis of Central Louisiana's regional assets, workforce capabilities, and existing industry specializations to identify the sectors Central Louisiana is poised to grow in the coming years. This data-driven process ensured alignment with statewide targets but oriented specifically to our region's unique competitive advantages.

Our sector growth strategy is based on two distinct areas of focus: major economic drivers and target sectors. Major drivers serve as our region's cross-cutting economic anchors – they are the foundational pillars that support the entire regional ecosystem. Additionally, we have identified specialized target sectors that build upon these major drivers and where Central Louisiana possesses high growth potential and a distinct advantage.



MAJOR ECONOMIC DRIVERS

MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing not only anchors Central Louisiana's economy but positions the region as a statewide leader in the industry. While not a standalone target sector, it underpins our other strategic focus areas – for example, agribusiness and wood products, energy, and aerospace and defense all rely on a strong manufacturing base. From farm to factory and petroleum production to shipbuilding, manufacturing has not only shaped our region's past but will catalyze its future growth.

Central Louisiana's manufacturing sector is an economic engine with over \$1.8 billion in GRP (2024) and a robust export market with nearly 90% of sales being exported beyond the region. In 2024, this sector generated over \$800 million in earnings, ranking it among our region's top sectors for total wages. Central Louisiana is a state-leading hub in wood products, paper and packaging, chemicals, advanced materials, and plastics. The diversity of these industries has created excellent depth in our regional manufacturing ecosystem. These industries are highly concentrated across clusters. Our region is not only an export powerhouse, but we supply most of our manufacturing demand locally – a strategic combination that points to highly integrated supply chains with economic impacts that ripple across our region's ecosystem. Future manufacturing growth will rely upon a two-fold strategy: we must bolster and support our legacy companies to help them sustain and scale operations, and we must also aggressively position our region to capture shifting policies and markets in manufacturing – capturing emerging opportunities in energy, biofuels, and rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and production technologies. There are clear opportunities and pockets of emerging excellence across Central Louisiana in technology, particularly in how it underpins advanced manufacturing through the use of advanced robotics, AI, and automation. We must elevate the use of these emerging technologies wherever possible – both to ensure the success of technology-focused companies in our region and to encourage others to view Central Louisiana as an ideal market for demonstration projects or integration with an existing ecosystem that values and leverages technology wherever possible – driving efficiencies and bringing in outside investment.

Our workforce pipeline is equally vital to manufacturing growth, with our partnerships with higher education institutions key to our region's economic success. Working closely with partners like Central Louisiana Technical Community College (CLTCC), Northwestern State University (NSU), Louisiana State University of Alexandria (LSUA), SOWELA Technical Community College, and Louisiana Christian University (LCU), we can provide the foundation to expand apprenticeships, work-based learning, and technical training, ensuring the region has the skilled talent needed to sustain growth.

TRANSPORTATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND LOGISTICS

Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics is a critical enabler across all of our target sectors and essential to the region's continued economic success. Central Louisiana's strategic location, combined with a well-connected transportation network, positions the region to efficiently move commodities within the state and across the nation. Our region is home to Alexandria International Airport, located within the nearly 4,000-acre England Airpark, which serves as a strategic asset to support logistics- and distribution-oriented economic development. In addition, three inland ports – the Central Louisiana Regional Port, Natchitoches Parish Port, and Port of Avoyelles – enhance multimodal connectivity and link the region to coastal hubs. Rail infrastructure, including Union Pacific Railroad (UP) and Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC), provides Class I rail access, solidifying Central Louisiana's role as a national crossroads. Interstate 49, which runs through the heart of the region, further improves access and supports the movement of freight, distribution, and logistics operations. Collectively, these transportation assets position Central Louisiana as a multimodal hub for trade, logistics, manufacturing, and distribution, creating a significant strategic advantage for regional economic development.

TARGET SECTOR SNAPSHOTS

AGRIBUSINESS & WOOD PRODUCTS

Crop and Animal Production, Forestry and Logging, and Wood and Paper Manufacturing

- **Strong GRP growth:** Total GRP increased from just over \$900 million in 2019 to nearly \$1.5 billion in 2024.
- **Export oriented:** 86.3% of all sales in these industries are exported outside the region, bringing significant new revenue to Central Louisiana.
- **Natural resource availability:** Forest coverage ranges from 35.5% to over 80% across parishes.
- **Industry Anchors:** Home to global leaders like RoyOMartin, Weyerhaeuser, Hunt Forest Products, and Drax Biomass.



ENERGY

Oil and Gas Extraction, Chemical and Component Manufacturing, Pipeline Transportation, and Data Processing

- **Quality jobs:** Average wages across this sector are as high as \$158,000.
- **Emergent industry hub:** The new \$2B SunGas Renewables facility signals confidence in the region's ability to support next-generation energy projects.
- **Legacy partners:** Cleco, a strong partner in economic development, has been investing in the region's grid reliability and infrastructure for decades.
- **Water availability:** Red River water system and reservoirs provide a massive competitive advantage for water-intensive data centers.



AEROSPACE & DEFENSE

Equipment, Aerospace Products, and Instrument Manufacturing, Research and Engineering, and Repair and Maintenance

- **Regional ecosystem:** Anchored by Fort Polk, the premier U.S. Army training hub, and England Airpark, a multi-modal economic hub and unique business development asset.
- **Macroeconomic trends:** Aggressive federal focus on Unmanned Air Systems (UAS) and drone technology manufacturing.
- **Talent pipeline:** The region holds a 1.33 employment concentration in Installation, Maintenance, and Repair occupations and is home to NSU's FAA-recognized drone programs and LSUA's aviation program.



HEALTHCARE

Hospitals, Medical Centers, Outpatient Care, Emergency Services, and Behavioral Health

- **Economic impact:** This sector supports over 22,000 jobs and \$1.6B in GRP.
- **Major employment driver:** A foundational employer; in Winn Parish, for example, healthcare accounts for 24% of all employment.
- **Educational partners:** All of the regions 4-year and technical and community colleges offer nursing programs, and many are expanding allied health professional offerings, creating a pipeline of talent for hospitals and medical centers.



TARGET SECTORS

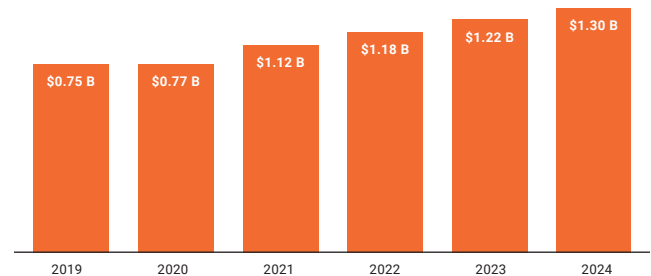
AGRIBUSINESS AND WOOD PRODUCTS

Key Targets: Sawmills, Veneer and Plywood Manufacturing, Crop Production, Digital and Precision Agriculture, Biomass and Renewable Fuels

- **2025 total employment:** 13,722
- **2024 average wages:** \$22,355 - \$115,508
- **2024 GRP:** \$1,488,577,477
- **2024 exported sales:** \$3,178,561,603

Our region is home to rich natural resources that provide a distinct competitive advantage and have served as an economic backbone for generations. Agriculture and wood products are among our most enduring legacy industries, deeply rooted in our history while evolving to meet the demands of modern markets. Our location within Louisiana's "wood basket" provides our region with some of the highest forest coverage rates in the state – ranging from 35.5% to more than 80% across our parishes – and forms the foundation of a robust forest and wood products economy. In 2024, agriculture and wood products industries contributed nearly \$1.5 billion to the regional economy, a notable increase from \$910 million in 2019, underscoring rapid and sustained growth. In 2025, this sector supported more than 13,000 jobs, representing a vital component of our workforce. This sector is also a strong export engine: 86.3% of all sales in these industries are exported outside the region, bringing significant new revenue to Central Louisiana. Many of our wood manufacturing industries – including hardwood and softwood veneer and plywood manufacturing – retain a strong local footprint, meeting more than 75% of regional demand, which further reinforces our competitive positioning and strengthens supply chain resilience.

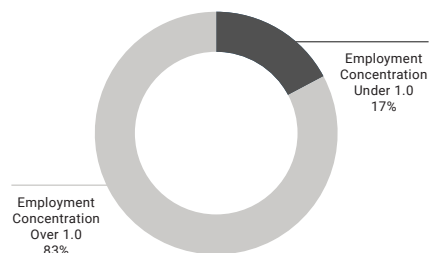
AGRIBUSINESS AND WOOD PRODUCTS GRP, 2019-24



Industry leaders and regional anchors operate throughout Central Louisiana. RoyOMartin maintains major operations in Rapides, Natchitoches, and Allen parishes, while Weyerhaeuser has a strong presence in Natchitoches Parish. Hunt Forest Products and LaSalle Lumber are headquartered and operate in LaSalle Parish, while Crest Natural Resources has long-standing operations in Rapides Parish. Collectively, these companies manage tens of thousands of acres of timberland and operate modern mills and processing facilities that provide stable employment and spur innovation. Companies such as Drax Biomass in LaSalle demonstrate how legacy wood industries can deploy new business models – converting forest residuals into renewable bioenergy and creating value-added markets for byproducts.

Agriculture and forest products are tightly interlinked in our economy. Farm and forest outputs feed into local processing, manufacturing, and logistics operations. The region's manufacturing base and available natural resources position Central Louisiana to capitalize on new technologies in precision agriculture, advanced manufacturing, and automated production systems to meet globally accelerating demand for food and crop-based products. This combination of industry expertise and experience makes our region well positioned to move up and down the agriculture and wood products value chain – from extraction to processing, product manufacturing, distribution, and innovation.

83% OF 2025 AGRIBUSINESS EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATIONS ARE OVER 1.0



These industries are highly concentrated in Central Louisiana relative to national averages, which gives us a strong platform for cluster development and economic resilience. Our strategy will prioritize strengthening the existing industry base, accelerating adoption of innovation and value-added processing, and deepening partnerships across manufacturing, logistics, technology, and education to ensure long-term competitiveness.



TARGET SECTORS

ENERGY

Key Targets: Energy innovation, AI technologies

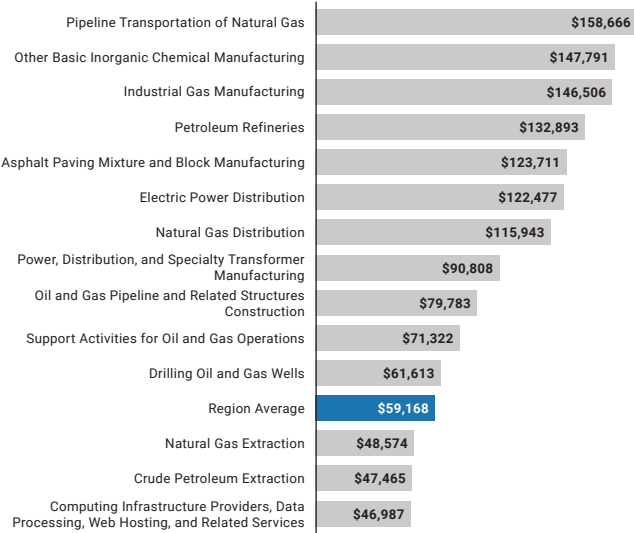
- 2025 total employment: 2,510
- 2024 average wages: \$46,987 - \$158,666
- 2024 GRP: \$638,681,705
- 2024 exported sales: \$704,667,514

Energy is undergoing a national and global transformation, and Central Louisiana is positioned to capitalize on this movement. As the state advances its “all-of-the-above” energy strategy, our region’s focus mirrors that approach. Demand is rising across traditional and emerging energy types, from oil and gas to renewables, nuclear power generation, and energy-intensive digital infrastructure. This “all-of-the-above” energy strategy intends to lean into these new, high-growth opportunities connected to increasing demand for energy while also embracing and supporting the legacy industries and energy models that built and continue to support our economy. Central Louisiana’s energy sector spans the full value chain – from extraction and generation to transmission and distribution. Anchored by long-standing industry leaders like Cleco, our region benefits from decades of investment in grid reliability, electric power generation, and infrastructure modernization. These assets underpin the competitiveness of manufacturing, advanced materials, aerospace, and logistics, creating multiplier effects across our entire regional economy.

New opportunities are emerging quickly. Fort Polk offers a unique advantage in nuclear energy, serving as a secure site with rapid permitting ability. Due to our region’s central location, power generated here can be easily transmitted to adjacent regions or industrial sites with significant power needs. With abundant biomass resources and international export requirements for efficient energy production, our region is well suited for next-generation energy production. Major projects – such as the planned SunGas Renewables clean fuel facility, a \$2 billion investment bringing over 1,100 jobs during construction and establishing 100 permanent jobs – signal the scale of possibility and demonstrate confidence in the region’s long-term energy platform.

At the same time, AI technology and infrastructure have become realistic and high-value targets and provide ample opportunity across the full value chain. Companies like Meta have already chosen Louisiana for multi-billion-dollar investments, and Central Louisiana offers the ideal combination of assets: reliable energy, large sites, low operating costs, and ample room to scale. The sector also delivers exceptional wages: natural gas pipeline transportation, chemical manufacturing, and petroleum refineries are among the region’s highest-paying industries, with average earnings regularly exceeding \$115,000 annually.

2024 AVERAGE EARNINGS PER JOB



Looking ahead, strengthening the region’s energy infrastructure will be essential, with expanded capacity and selective site readiness investments focused on supporting the continued growth of our energy sector.

TARGET SECTORS

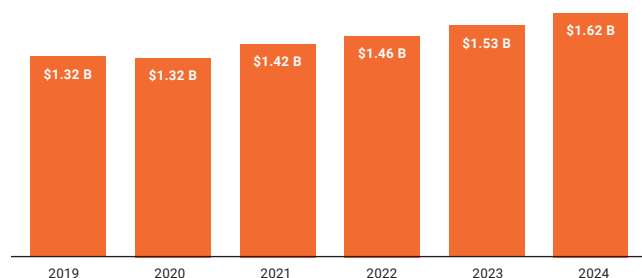
HEALTHCARE

Key Targets:

- **2025 total employment:** 21,962
- **2024 average wages:** \$24,898 - \$96,850
- **2024 GRP:** \$1,615,939,038

Healthcare is both a foundational quality-of-life asset and a major economic engine for our region. It not only enables residents to live, work, and thrive – it represents one of our largest employment sectors and most stable sources of economic activity. In 2025, healthcare-related businesses supported nearly 22,000 jobs across the region and contributed approximately \$1.6 billion to the regional economy in 2024. This economic impact has steadily increased year-over-year, reinforcing the sector's importance to both community well-being and regional competitiveness. This target sector includes private hospitals, ambulatory health services, nursing and residential care facilities, as well as public-sector hospitals.

HEALTHCARE GRP, 2019-24



While many sectors focus on recruitment of new industries and employers or expansion of export activity, the healthcare sector requires a distinctive and deliberate strategy – one centered on retention, expansion, and workforce sustainability. Our efforts in this sector will focus on supporting the sustainability and growth of healthcare providers in the region, including attracting specialists that can further enhance quality of life and overall healthcare access for our residents; growing our workforce pipeline through strong partnerships with hospitals, higher education, training institutions, and workforce agencies to rapidly address critical staffing shortages; and innovation, where we must continually foster public-private collaboration and creative strategies to expand access and enhance service delivery for our residents.

This sector extends well beyond traditional economic impact. Access to care is central to community vitality and quality of life. We recognize the persistent healthcare challenges that are unique to rural settings, including limited specialist availability, lengthy travel times for advanced care, and growing workforce shortages. These limitations affect not only current residents but also our ability to attract new employers and a competitive workforce. Despite these challenges, our region is home to several standout healthcare institutions that are redefining rural healthcare excellence. Facilities such as Hardtner Medical Center, Avoyelles Hospital, Trinity Medical Center, CHRISTUS Cabrini St. Frances, and Rapides Regional Medical Center are demonstrating innovation through modern infrastructure, expanded specialist services, and efforts to grow local capacity. These examples illustrate the opportunity to leverage healthcare as both a community differentiator and a competitive economic asset.

TARGET SECTORS

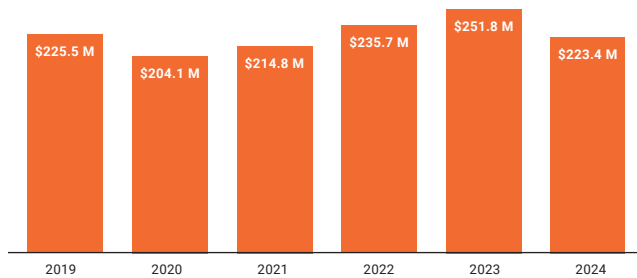
AEROSPACE AND DEFENSE

Key Targets: Unmanned Air Systems (UAS), Drone Technology, Commercial Aviation

- **2025 total employment:** 2,162
- **2024 average wages:** \$46,639 - \$107,368
- **2024 GRP:** \$221,531,022

Aerospace and Defense in Central Louisiana spans advanced manufacturing, engineering and technical services, defense contracting, electronic product manufacturing, and repair and maintenance operations. This sector is a high-wage, technology-driven sector with deep connections to engineering and manufacturing. Regionally, its economic output has remained steady, indicating a stable base with room to expand into higher-value activities and catalyze growth.

AEROSPACE AND DEFENSE GRP, 2019-24



One of our most important assets and competitive advantages in this sector is Fort Polk – a nearly 200,000-acre United States Army installation in Vernon Parish – known for its scale and role as a Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC).

Fort Polk is more than a base; it is the premier training hub for the U.S. Army and a major economic engine for the region, with thousands of soldiers, families, civilian staff, and contractors living on or near the base. This presence generates significant payroll, local spending, and demand for services. Recent years have seen hundreds of millions of dollars in investment to maintain and upgrade infrastructure at and around the base, signaling strong federal commitment and reinforcing Fort Polk's long-term viability in the region.

At Fort Polk, there is extensive capacity for technology-driven research, development, and testing – a rare and highly competitive asset on a national scale. These capabilities position Central Louisiana as a key player in the nation's ongoing defense transformation. As the military seeks to rapidly integrate technology and innovative approaches in its operations, our region can support with a cutting-edge testing environment and deep technical expertise. We must move decisively in our business development efforts to recruit core defense contractors and mission support providers to establish a permanent presence, expanding the critical services performed on-site and helping to capture high-wage defense contracting dollars.

Strengthening our position in this sector is England Airpark – a hub connecting commercial aviation and national defense that positions us to aggressively attract Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) operations that require access to both military operations and overall connectivity. England Airpark generates hundreds of millions in annual economic impact, supports thousands of jobs, and hosts dozens of industrial and aviation tenants. England Airpark is a truly unique asset – with fully controlled airspace, 24/7 tower operations,

and a Foreign Trade Zone that reduces scale-up risk and accelerates speed to market – and can be even more prominently positioned as a secure platform for aerospace technology. Together, England Airpark and Fort Polk make our region truly unique – offering a rare combination of large-scale military activity, specialized training capacity, infrastructure, and connectivity. This positions Central Louisiana to compete nationally for defense, aviation, and logistics investment, enabling firms to serve military needs in a cost-competitive, well-connected, and well-established environment. These assets also position our region advantageously to capitalize on the recent federal U.S. executive orders focused on increasing drone operations and manufacturing. UAS and drone technologies are growing at a rapid pace in this new landscape, and we have the infrastructure in place to match that speed.

The region's higher education ecosystem also complements this target sector well and is evolving rapidly to support aviation, engineering, and UAS growth. This is evident through NSU's Remote Systems Science and Technology (RSST) Program and FAA-recognized drone education pathways and LSUA's professional aviation program. There are also strong numbers of engineering and technical graduates from LSUA and CLTCC. These institutions give the region a foundation for the talent required for expansion into high-value services like aviation operations, electronics, software, simulation, and technical maintenance roles. Meanwhile, defense contractors' growing need to outsource systems engineering, program management, cybersecurity, and IT modernization creates opportunities that align with the region's strengths in computer science, engineering, and technical training.

These assets and pathways offer manufacturers and service providers clear routes to capture more sophisticated, higher-margin work in the defense industrial base – further positioning the region to expand in mission readiness, simulation, engineering services, drone technologies, and advanced manufacturing.



STRATEGIC PILLARS

Our focus on strengthening and growing the Central Louisiana economy is guided by four foundational pillars: Organizational Excellence, Economic Development, Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships, and Marketing and Communications. These pillars serve as the framework for how we operate, collaborate, and compete as a region. Together, they will help ensure all ten parishes of our region are supported and positioned to grow, and that Louisiana Central is well-positioned to be a catalyst in elevating our regional economy – by collaborating with intention, telling a compelling story, and growing Central Louisiana’s capacity to compete in a changing and ever-evolving economic landscape.



Within each pillar, we define a goal – a shared vision of success and the key target we are working to achieve. To advance each pillar and achieve our goals, we identify key strategies that guide our efforts and clarify the actions we will take. We will also utilize success metrics – specific guides that will help us measure advancement and share results – to track our progress and ensure transparency and accountability to this roadmap and the progress we intend to make.

Through intentional alignment with the state’s economic development strategy outlined in the Positioning Louisiana to Win strategic plan, we can maximize our collective impact and mutual support. This state plan serves as a foundational framework for our regional strategy, recognizing that what strengthens our region strengthens the state, and our success is both shared and highly dependent on one another. As such, this plan outlines the areas of strongest alignment between our strategic pillars and the state’s pillars of prosperity, ensuring shared direction and coordinated action in the years to come.



STRATEGIC PILLARS

ORGANIZATIONAL
EXCELLENCE

We are elevating our
organization to perform
at the highest level.

The strategies in this plan can only reach their full potential with a strong, well-coordinated, and adequately resourced team at Louisiana Central. We will work to ensure our organization, which is primarily responsible for implementing this plan, is structured and resourced for success and scaled to serve our ten-parish region across all strategic pillars. Strengthening our internal capacity does not detract from our work in economic development, communications, or partnerships – it is what enables it. To this end, we will implement a clear and future-focused organizational structure, supported by structured and scalable systems that allow for consistent execution and responsiveness. This approach will help ensure every initiative – from business retention and expansion to lead generation, attraction, site development, advocacy, and innovation – is managed strategically and delivered with excellence. Capacity building is an immediate priority. This includes not only strengthening and building upon current staff and operational infrastructure but also assessing our governance, funding models, and other enabling structures to ensure they are aligned with best practices and effectively positioned to drive our region's growth. It also includes intentionally investing in our team's subject-matter expertise and technical capabilities, building on existing strengths to continue elevating the caliber and scale of support we provide to our stakeholders and partners. By modernizing, scaling, and aligning our organizational backbone, we can help ensure that the full potential of this strategic plan, and our region's future, can be realized.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Establish investment structures and tiers informed by an analysis of regional investor capacity.
- Identify and secure grant funding associated with key strategic initiatives and target sectors for growth.
- Develop and launch a targeted and sophisticated investor development program to secure the resources necessary to execute strategic initiatives and support long-term organizational growth and sustainability.

INTERNAL OPERATIONS AND CAPACITY

- Revamp the Louisiana Central organization, developing structures and expanding staff capacity to support key workstreams (business development, investor relations, marketing and communications, public policy, business attraction, etc.) and target sectors, aligning with best practices and regional growth targets.
- Modernize and streamline the Louisiana Central governance model to strengthen overall effectiveness, support regional representation, and foster greater alignment with the organization's strategic direction.
- Conduct a comprehensive internal inventory of all processes and systems, identifying and prioritizing areas for investment and new system or technology integration.
- Consider a comprehensive rebrand to modernize the organization's identity, strengthen its connection to the region, and better reflect its role in the economic development ecosystem.

Our Goal: Transform Louisiana Central to become a top performing regional economic development organization in Louisiana.

LED Alignment: This pillar supports LED's Thriving Regions pillar. It focuses on building an organization that can provide the highest level of support to the Central Louisiana region.

- Establish a formal, ongoing performance and alignment framework to regularly assess organizational effectiveness, board and committee performance, strategic focus, and capacity needs to foster continuous improvement and accountability, in alignment with the IEDC's Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO) standards.

STAFF EXPERTISE AND ADVANCEMENT

- Expand training and professional development opportunities for staff to support continuous learning and encourage career growth aligned with organizational goals.
- Coordinate benchmarking and learning trips for regional leaders and Louisiana Central staff to engage with high-performing regions in Louisiana and across the Gulf South, capturing best practices and innovative approaches that can be leveraged in Central Louisiana.

METRICS

- Total staff FTEs
- Organizational revenue
- Resource development campaign success
- Achievement of AEDO status



STRATEGIC PILLARS

ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

We are accelerating a unified strategy focused on creating opportunity across our region that is responsive and adaptive to the unique landscape in each of our parishes.

As a regional economic development organization, we exist to drive job creation, attract capital investment, and strengthen the economic position of every parish we serve. We support business and industry, foster innovation and entrepreneurship, and ensure our region remains competitive and prosperous – not just for one or two parishes, but for the entire ten-parish region of Central Louisiana. This work is not one-size-fits-all; in practice, each strategy will be applied in a right-fit way for each parish.

While the practice of economic development continues to rapidly evolve, its foundational principles remain central to our work: retaining and expanding existing businesses, attracting new investment, and advancing strategic site development. At the same time, we recognize that workforce development is no longer adjacent to economic development – it is essential. A strong, skilled, and resilient labor force is the cornerstone of both current and future economic success. We cannot achieve maximum impact by working in silos. That is why we are taking a holistic, integrated approach to economic development – connecting community development, workforce, small business support, and wrap-around services. These elements are not add-ons; they are essential components of economic development.

We will pursue a balanced, two-pronged approach to business attraction and development. First, we will deepen our Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) efforts – staying closely connected to our existing employers, understanding their needs, and responding quickly at the speed of business. Ensuring that current businesses have what they need to grow and thrive is essential; they have been investing in their communities, their parishes, and our region, and we must support them in turn. At the same time, we will actively seek new investment that brings additional capital, jobs, and opportunities to Central Louisiana. A competitive regional economy requires both strong BRE and targeted business attraction functions.

Small businesses will also remain a central focus of our work. As a rural region, many of our communities are powered by small enterprises – they are the backbone of our economy. Louisiana Central's Business Acceleration System (BAS) program has an extensive track record of success and is a hallmark resource for our region's entrepreneurs. We want to expand this program in the coming years to reach even more aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners, but our focus on supporting our small business economy doesn't stop there. We know there is more we can do to support our small business owners and entrepreneurs – from stronger integration into existing supply chains in the region and workforce connections to capital connections that enable more rapid, effective growth. Across the region, 86.6% of businesses have fewer than 20 employees. These businesses often need different types of support, and we recognize that entrepreneurship is already a bold journey. Our role is to make it easier to start, to grow and scale, to exit, and to reinvest capital back into a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Our Goal:

Expand business investment and job opportunity to grow our regional economy.

LED Alignment: This pillar supports all of the state's pillars of prosperity. With a focus on site investment and information readiness, we are focused on facilitating greater Ease of Doing Business across the region. Our intense focus on increasing labor force participation and aligning educational offerings with employer needs improves access to High Wage Employment. In enhancing our business attraction, retention, and expansion efforts, we aim to grow our economy – expanding Growth and Innovation and Global Impact. With intentional strategies related to site improvements and quality-of-place and small business support, we are continually working to support a Thriving Region in Central Louisiana.

Workforce development – a core pillar of our regional approach to economic development – is equally critical. While we want to recruit as much talent as possible to our region, and remain focused on doing so, we also recognize that activating our existing workforce is one of the keys to our growth. Today, only 56.1% of working-age individuals participate in our regional labor force – meaning 44 out of every 100 residents are not employed, actively looking for a job, or engaged in our economy. We can, and must, change this. Central Louisiana has the people; we must strengthen the systems that connect them to the right jobs, training, and educational pathways.

Central Louisiana has also distinguished itself through the successful implementation and early adoption of the ACT Work Ready Communities initiative, with every parish in the region fully Work Ready-certified.

We are uniquely positioned for growth with unmatched assets and opportunities. We sit at the crossroads of critical infrastructure with access to ports, rail, air, and major transportation corridors. Our expansive land availability offers significant potential for site development, industry growth, and long-term competitiveness. Together, these strengths make up a region that is ready to compete.

BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION, AND ATTRACTION

- Establish a more robust, coordinated, and targeted business development and marketing campaign focused on more proactive engagement with stakeholders and prospects, aggressive lead-generation, institutionalizing processes and business relationships that underpin a modern approach to economic development.

- Track and analyze workforce challenges and emerging trends identified through BRE visits (skills gaps, retention concerns, training needs, etc.) to inform regional training programs and strategic investments.
- Establish mechanisms to improve awareness and use of incentives to drive new local investment.
- Develop and implement an aggressive plan for attending conferences and industry events aligned with target sectors.

SITE INVESTMENT AND READINESS

- Inventory all existing industrial and commercial sites to assess readiness, infrastructure, and zoning and identify gaps to create a shovel-ready infrastructure pipeline.
- Consistently develop standardized site profiles with property data, infrastructure assets, workforce availability, zoning and permitting information, and sector relevance to support marketing and attraction efforts.
- Identify top sites in the region to aggressively package and promote, generating detailed and comprehensive data reporting to align with rigorous expectations and evaluation criteria of site selectors.
- Maintain and invest in development-ready sites to position the region for new investment, balancing these efforts across the region with both mega-site development and smaller-scale industrial parks for rural parishes.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

We are accelerating a unified strategy focused on creating opportunity across our region that is responsive and adaptive to the unique landscape in each of our parishes.

WORKFORCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Coordinate with local, state, and federal partners to secure funding and promote access to childcare, transportation, housing, and other mechanisms that improve the region's workforce infrastructure.
- Partner with regional employers, higher education institutions, and community and technical colleges to expand and align employer-led apprenticeships, stackable credentials, short-term training programs, and innovative partnerships focused on connecting skilled talent with in-demand job opportunities.
- Support technical and community college partners in expanding or renovating space to grow capacity and attracting instructors to maintain instructional quality and facilitate program growth.
- Implement a workforce development initiative in partnership with area colleges and universities focused on proactively reskilling/upskilling service members and civilian military employees exiting Fort Polk, aligning their capabilities with the region's priority industry and employment needs – supporting population retention and long-term regional workforce growth.
- Position Louisiana Central as the regional driver for increasing labor force participation and reducing barriers to employment through large-scale convenings and real-time coordination across workforce development, economic development, and nonprofit sectors.

- Building on the planning process's engagement and research, conduct an asset and opportunity analysis for all 10 parishes to guide local action and highlight priority areas for growth.

SMALL BUSINESSES GROWTH AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Conduct or support a regional entrepreneurial ecosystem study to identify current gaps and opportunities for entrepreneurs and identify ways to strengthen the region's ability to support high-growth and innovation-driven startups.
- Support the formation of an angel investors network in Central Louisiana with a focus on investing in high-growth, early-stage ventures in the region.
- Expand the Business Accelerator Support (BAS) program to support more businesses and integrate additional programming and resources that support participant needs at all stages of their startup lifecycle.
- Coordinate with parishes and local chambers of commerce across the region to establish a "business ombudsman" role that helps small businesses navigate local, state, and federal requirements from permitting to taxes and tap into local procurement or supply chain opportunities.

Our Goal:

Expand business investment and job opportunity to grow our regional economy.

LED Alignment: This pillar supports all of the state's pillars of prosperity. With a focus on site investment and information readiness, we are focused on facilitating greater Ease of Doing Business across the region. Our intense focus on increasing labor force participation and aligning educational offerings with employer needs improves access to High Wage Employment. In enhancing our business attraction, retention, and expansion efforts, we aim to grow our economy – expanding Growth and Innovation and Global Impact. With intentional strategies related to site improvements and quality-of-place and small business support, we are continually working to support a Thriving Region in Central Louisiana.

- Facilitate regular convenings for small businesses in the region around key topics, shared industries, and various business stages and growth cycles.

METRICS

- Regional GRP
- Labor force participation rate
- Total investment from attraction or expansion efforts
- New jobs created through attraction or expansion efforts
- Total projected capital investment and jobs created via business development pipeline
- Annual leads generated
- Angel and seed investments made in Central Louisiana-based companies
- Small business revenue increase driven by BAS program



STRATEGIC PILLARS

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
AND PARTNERSHIPS

We are enhancing and deepening our partnerships through coordinated action and accountability.

Economic development is a team sport, and we know we cannot do this without our partners and supporters across the region and state. Part of Louisiana Central's duty as a regional economic development organization includes facilitating capacity and growth across all of our 10 parishes, from urban to rural partners. We do not support from the sidelines. We serve as an extension of our partners, providing expanded capacity and direct project management support to help them succeed and accelerate growth. Our approach goes beyond traditional economic development partnerships. As we broaden our focus and take a more holistic approach to advancing economic opportunity, our partnerships reflect this. That is why we intentionally work with partners across workforce, arts and culture, community development, and tourism. Another facet of this responsibility is supporting community development, ensuring our communities have what they need to grow and thrive. Our aim is to elevate our existing relationships, doubling down on partners that have supported our region for years, and pursue new partnerships across every facet of our work and all corners of our region. We are also committed to continuous improvement – actively learning from our partners, investing in new ideas, and applying emerging research and best practices to strengthen our impact and remain at the forefront of the field.

Working together requires clear communication and education, ensuring all leaders understand their role in economic development. We will maintain a strong, consistent presence in all ten parishes, deepening our engagement with business leaders and regional partners. To effectively support the region, we must understand the realities on the ground – the opportunities present for business and industry, as well as the challenges and roadblocks hindering growth and competitiveness. Sustained, proactive outreach across our entire geographic footprint is not optional; it is foundational to how we will grow, respond, and compete.

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

- Clearly position Louisiana Central as the economic development convener for the region, serving as a hub and primary point of contact for regional partners, building consistent alignment, visibility, and engagement across all parishes, sectors, and stakeholder groups.
- Build a more connected regional economic development ecosystem through aggressive communications and outreach, ensuring all current and future partners know the role of Louisiana Central and the support and resources available to them.
- Launch a signature fundraising initiative, event, or engagement strategy (e.g., regional leadership cohort, ambassador program, employer-sponsored programming) to align partners around regional priorities and reinforce Louisiana Central's role as a leader and trusted partner in economic development.
- Bolster the efforts of partners including the Central Louisiana Regional Chamber of Commerce by proactively providing subject matter expertise and advocacy support on targeted economic development and regional competitiveness policy issues.

Our Goal: Serve as the “go-to” economic development resource, providing leadership and subject matter expertise for parishes, business and community leaders, and stakeholders across the region.

LED Alignment: This pillar supports LED’s Ease of Doing Business pillar. It focuses on making it easier for our partners to work with Louisiana Central and connect with other business and industry stakeholders. It supports the High-wage Employment and Global Impact pillars with a focus on deepening industry engagement and better understanding the needs of our businesses, with a focus on supporting growth and anticipating business needs.

TARGET SECTOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Strengthen and scale sector-focused partnerships by sustaining healthcare and manufacturing councils and exploring replication across additional target sectors. Signature opportunities include a defense industry group; a collaborative energy and agriculture task force for next-generation biomass, renewable fuels, and carbon management projects; growing Healthcare Career Central with a revitalized charge to monitor workforce needs and share innovative best practices; and scaling the Manufacturing Career Camp to impact even more parishes and youth in Central Louisiana.
- Convene a regular, large-scale workforce forum bringing together faith leaders, companies, and workforce partners to more effectively connect potential employees and employers – thereby addressing pressing workforce needs and improving the region’s labor-force participation.
- Strengthen current and future partnerships with other economic development and related organizations through CEAs, MOUs, or other agreements, focused on shared regional growth and competitiveness priorities.

LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Regularly attend and present at local government meetings, chamber meetings or gatherings, industry convenings, and other forums across the region.
- Build on the organization’s “community-focused” value, reinforcing a culture of external engagement and customer service focused on strong, meaningful relationships with stakeholders across the region and state.

- Establish local economic development capacity building program through the deployment of dedicated staff to support parishes and regional partners, lending their expertise, capacity, real-time intelligence gathering, and comprehensive knowledge of local assets, opportunities, and challenges.
- Establish parish-level strike teams with relevant economic development, workforce, infrastructure, utility, and government partners to rapidly advance new projects.
- Develop a Local Economic Development Playbook to guide rural communities in grantmaking, placemaking initiatives, and small-scale business support, improving local readiness for investment and implementation and enhancing coordination.

METRICS

- Signature program launch and participation
- Sector-focused partnership growth, participation, and impact
- Frequency of parish visits
- Local Economic Development Playbook development and utilization
- Manufacturing Career Camp participation

STRATEGIC PILLARS

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

We are amplifying our communication to elevate the region's story.

Effective storytelling is essential to position Central Louisiana as a vibrant and competitive region. We will take ownership of our regional narrative and help ensure that our distinctive strengths, competitive advantages, and emerging opportunities are clearly articulated and widely recognized. Our region has a strong track record of success, with countless examples of innovation, growth, and resilience; these are stories that must be elevated and shared with a broader audience. We will proactively communicate our value proposition to potential investors and businesses, making it clear that we are open for business, ready to compete, and exceptionally well-positioned for growth. At the same time, we will promote the quality of life, character of our communities, and welcoming environment we offer – ensuring prospective residents and workforce participants understand why this is a great place to build a life and career. Part of our mission is providing education to our region – on the state of the economy, the challenges and successes we are seeing across the region, and on emerging trends. We will elevate Louisiana Central as a trusted thought leader and the go-to resource for all economic insights and updates, guiding informed decisions across the region.

Our approach goes beyond traditional messaging; it prioritizes transparency and sharing measurable impact. By leveraging external dashboards and tracking metrics, we will ensure marketing efforts are targeted and continuously refined. From elevating parish-level achievements to highlighting regional amenities, these strategies will strengthen pride of place, foster a more unified image of our region, and support our long-term growth and viability. These efforts are critical to positioning our region as a desirable place for talent and top location for businesses and investment.

PLACEMAKING AND REGIONAL IDENTITY

- Position quality of life as an economic asset for the region by integrating affordability, outdoor amenities, and sense of community into talent attraction, workforce retention, and employer recruitment efforts.
- Champion placemaking and revitalization efforts across the region by elevating place-based strategies as core economic development tools, coordinating partners and resources, and supporting local initiatives that strengthen community identity across all parishes (e.g., beautification, façade improvements, signage, etc.).
- Elevate parish-level visibility by capturing and promoting success stories, local assets, and community-specific opportunities that reinforce and amplify regional identity and engagement.

REGIONAL MARKETING, MESSAGING AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Develop and launch a full-scale lead generation and marketing campaign to attract businesses and investors, raising awareness of Central Louisiana's economic opportunities and community assets.
- Better align and integrate marketing efforts with key regional partners such as LED, Cleco, and England Airpark to strengthen the regional brand and foster consistency in messaging.
- Evolve the existing regional talent campaign, "The Real Easy," developing additional marketing tools and communication resources for use by Louisiana Central and regional partners (e.g., relocation toolkit, social media content, etc.) to expand partner communications capacity and coordinate messaging.

Our Goal: Elevate the Central Louisiana narrative, revitalizing our regional story through consistent, positive, and transparent communications.

LED Alignment: This pillar supports LED's High-Wage Employment pillar. It focuses on talent attraction and retention and can support the statewide Louisiana Opportunity marketing effort. It also supports the Ease of Doing Business pillar with streamlined communication and messaging that will reduce friction for new and growing businesses.

EXTERNAL PRESENCE AND TRANSPARENCY

- Redesign and overhaul Louisiana Central website and all public-facing digital assets, including an audit of all external messaging and communications to reposition and strengthen the organization's external positioning and ensure all engagement points are optimized to support lead generation and prospect engagement.
- Leverage data, dashboards, and transparent reporting on regional economic and community metrics to track and report progress on this strategic plan, reinforce Central Louisiana's story through measurable outcomes, and build overall credibility within and outside the region.

METRICS

- Website performance (e.g., unique visitors, time on site, etc.)
- Media engagement and coverage sentiment
- Dashboard data metrics and update frequency
- Perception and recognition of Louisiana Central brand
- Communication resource utilization
- Regional talent retention and relocation progress (e.g., outmigration data, employer observations, etc.)



LOCAL COORDINATION AND SUPPORT



This is a unified regional strategic plan focused on serving all ten parishes in Central Louisiana. While it provides a framework for collective growth, we also recognize that distinct economic strengths, assets, and challenges exist in each parish. Economic progress in Central Louisiana will require both regional alignment and coordination and parish-level commitment. To accelerate regional growth, we are intentionally transitioning Louisiana Central into a more active and engaged technical partner, providing direct support to our parishes. We recognize that each parish has unique goals and specific challenges; therefore, our support and relationships will never fall under the classification of “one-size-fits-all.” We understand the foundational elements that communities need to be successful, and we are committed to amplifying our boots-on-the-ground support across three core areas: Business Navigation and Regional Advocacy, Capacity Building and Technical Assistance, and Business Readiness and Infrastructure Support.

BUSINESS NAVIGATION AND REGIONAL ADVOCACY

Louisiana Central will be known as a “business ombudsman” for the region. Our organization can, and should, be a central navigator for the business community, serving as a bridge between local enterprises, relevant leaders and decision-makers, and local and state-level processes – ensuring that businesses have access to the resources, information, and people necessary to efficiently start or relocate and effectively grow their businesses in each of the parishes of our region.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Parishes across Central Louisiana have varying stages of economic development capabilities, largely due to the variation of available resources that exist across a region with primarily rural communities. Louisiana Central is focused on working with local and state partners to provide the additional capacity, guidance, and technical assistance needed to ensure no parish is left behind due to a lack of specialization or technical knowledge – from serving as a thought partner or train-the-trainer resource to filling project management functions for complex business and economic development efforts. Louisiana Central will also serve as a resource for strategic planning across all parishes in our region where necessary, providing leadership and technical assistance to support the development of parish economic development plans in alignment with state priorities for rural economic growth. Through this plan’s engagement and data analysis, we have gained valuable insights into our parishes, highlighting their distinctive strengths and assets, as well as some of their most pressing challenges. To help parishes focus their actions and initiatives, we will conduct and provide an asset and opportunity analysis for each parish.

BUSINESS READINESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

Economic growth requires a “market-ready” environment. We will provide the foundational support needed to attract and retain investment, including guidance and support across the region in identifying high-potential land assets, along with the technical steps required to make them attractive to private-sector investors. Recognizing that economic success is tied to community health, we will also assist parishes in advocating for and advancing key local development efforts, from infrastructure planning to quality-of-life initiatives.



PARISH OVERVIEWS

We are focused on continually highlighting each parish's unique competitive advantages and opportunities, along with the challenges that we collectively know must be addressed to support long-term economic resilience and growth in each parish. While the target sectors identified in this plan apply to the full region, we recognize each parish will contribute to these sectors in different ways based on its existing industry base, workforce, infrastructure, and assets. To reflect this, we have identified where each parish has the greatest potential to support or lead across our target sectors. This framework supports alignment with regional goals and ensures every parish has a clear role in shaping parish and regional economic prosperity.





ALLEN PARISH



With a total GRP (2024) of \$816.1 million, the Allen Parish economy is anchored by government and manufacturing, which together contribute nearly 60% of the parish's economic output. The parish has seen significant growth in healthcare support (+26%) occupations, alongside rising momentum in healthcare (+15% since 2019) and a sharp rebound in mining, oil, and gas (+42%) employment. Major assets driving this activity include the Coshatta Casino Resort and significant recent investments from RoyOMartin (\$30 million) to modernize its timber facility and Boise Cascade (\$75 million) to expand its veneer facility.

As of 2024, the population declined by 15.2% since 2019, falling by 3,887 residents. Population is expected to decrease further by 8.2% between 2024 and 2029. However, labor force participation has shown resilience, increasing from 53.1% to 56.8% since 2019. Total jobs decreased by 4.1% over the last five years.

ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

Target Sector

Alignment:

Agribusiness and Wood
Products and Energy

TOP SECTORS

Allen Parish's largest sectors by total GRP contribution. These sectors form the core of the parish's economic base, representing the majority of its output.

SECTOR	2024 GRP
Government	\$342,478,251
Manufacturing	\$138,468,759
Retail Trade	\$58,953,038
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$58,789,825

TOP INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Allen Parish's top regional clusters. These clusters denote where the parish has strong economic performance and competitive advantages relative to national benchmarks.

CLUSTER	SCORE
State Government Services	95
Wood Products	89
Federal Government Services	87
Upstream Chemical Products	65
Oil and Gas Production and Transportation	62

ADVANTAGES

Allen Parish benefits from rich natural resources, including fertile farmland for rice and soybeans and extensive timberlands that support its strong wood products cluster. The Coshatta Casino Resort serves as a major regional tourism anchor, while access to railways and abundant water resources supports industrial potential. Future opportunities include a potential new industrial park and the Mill Creek Reservoir project, as well as emerging opportunities in carbon capture and sequestration (CCS).

BARRIERS

Stakeholders highlight that a decline in casino revenue due to state policy shifts has created funding gaps. Housing shortages are cited as a primary barrier to growth, and workforce retention remains difficult as talent often leaves for higher wages elsewhere. Additionally, while there is industry interest in CCS projects, they have faced local opposition due to out-of-market advocacy efforts and lack of a clearly communicated value proposition for residents.

AVOYELLES PARISH



With a total GRP (2024) of \$1.12 billion, the Avoyelles Parish economy is anchored by government and consumer services, with strong contributions from utilities and oil and gas. The parish has seen significant growth in professional, scientific, and technical services (+42% since 2019) and manufacturing (+23%) jobs, positioning it well to support many of the region's target sectors. Avoyelles also boasts a high employment concentration (3.11) in agriculture – indicating a strong employment base and deep workforce specialization. The parish already has longstanding strengths in wood processing and manufacturing, signaled by the continually growing Great Southern Wood Preserving site in Mansura.

As of 2024, the region's population declined by 5.1% since 2019, falling by 2,037. Population is expected to decrease by 4.2% between 2024 and 2029, losing 1,599. Avoyelles Parish's labor market is stable, with a steady labor-force participation rate (54.4% in 2024 to 53.9% in 2019). Total jobs are also down 4.9%.

ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

Target Sector Alignment:
Agribusiness and Wood Products

TOP SECTORS

Avoyelles Parish's largest sectors by total GRP contribution. These sectors form the core of the parish's economic base, representing the majority of its output.

SECTOR	2024 GRP
Government	\$224,861,617
Retail Trade	\$126,935,550
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$122,152,344
Finance and Insurance	\$105,983,761

TOP INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Avoyelles Parish's top regional clusters. These clusters denote where the parish has strong economic performance and competitive advantages relative to national benchmarks.

CLUSTER	SCORE
State Government Services	71
Production Technology and Heavy Machinery	54
Local Utilities	54
Financial Services	52
Construction Products and Services	50
Textile Manufacturing	48

ADVANTAGES

Avoyelles Parish benefits from a robust and diverse agricultural base, leading the region in farm count and consistently producing high yields of rice, corn, soybeans, and cattle. Agriculture drives the parish economy, with crop production generating the highest GRP output and employment among local industries. The parish is also well positioned to grow its tourism sector, home to the Paragon Casino Resort and several Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and local museums. In addition, the Bunkie Industrial Park presents a unique development opportunity – offering a 96-acre industrial site with highway access and a market of nearly one million people within a 90-minute drive.

BARRIERS

Employers report challenges finding available and qualified workers, a concern intensified by the parish's declining population. Workforce constraints affect business retention, expansion, and attraction, as companies view evidence of an accessible labor pool as a key factor in location decisions.

Healthcare access is also a related challenge. While the parish is served by Bunkie General Hospital and Avoyelles Hospital, stakeholders note gaps in specialty and acute-care availability, as well as transportation barriers that make accessing services more difficult for residents. Stakeholders emphasized the need for improved regional connectivity to expand customer bases for local businesses, enhance freight mobility, and generate broader economic momentum.

CATAHOULA PARISH



With a total GRP (2024) of \$252.1 million, the Catahoula Parish economy is anchored by government, agriculture, and construction. Agriculture remains the parish's core economic driver, with crop production generating the highest GRP (\$20.3 million) at the industry level and boasting an exceptional employment concentration of 17.38. The region also benefits from a high employment concentration in energy (4.21) and has seen steady growth in the manufacturing sector, creating a strong foundation for growth aligned with the region's target sectors. The parish is a hub for hunting and fishing with a wide range of hunting lodges and many Wildlife Management Areas.

As of 2024, the parish population declined by 11.9% since 2019, falling by 1,131 residents. Population is expected to decrease by an additional 5.8% between 2024 and 2029. Despite population loss, the labor market has been improving, with labor force participation rising from 55.8% in 2020 to 61.2% in 2024. Total jobs have increased by roughly 12% since 2019.

ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

Target Sector

Alignment:

Agribusiness and Wood
Products and Energy

TOP SECTORS

Catahoula Parish's largest sectors by total GRP contribution. These sectors form the core of the parish's economic base, representing the majority of its output.

SECTOR	2024 GRP
Government	\$39,136,944
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	\$25,351,565
Construction	\$22,773,414
Retail Trade	\$21,009,109

TOP INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Catahoula Parish's top regional clusters. These clusters denote where the parish has strong economic performance and competitive advantages relative to national benchmarks.

CLUSTER	SCORE
Local Utilities	100
Local Government Services	98
Local Real Estate, Construction, and Development	75
Construction Products and Services	67
Business Services	63

ADVANTAGES

Catahoula Parish possesses a strong natural resource base with extensive hardwood and pine timberlands and productive row crop agriculture (cotton, corn, soybeans). The Ouachita River and state highways provide essential transportation corridors for these goods. Catahoula also offers unique potential in the tourism and recreation sector. The parish is home to the Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge, a natural asset that provides a platform for developing niche ecotourism and hunting/fishing recreation activities.

BARRIERS

The parish's small population creates significant workforce gaps, making it difficult for employers to find qualified workers. Infrastructure challenges are prominent; stakeholders noted that bridge maintenance is a costly obstacle and that broadband access remains a barrier to business growth. Additionally, a lack of investment-ready sites limits the parish's ability to attract new industrial employers.

CONCORDIA PARISH



With a total GRP (2024) of \$665.7 million, the Concordia Parish economy is anchored by government, retail, and wholesale trade. The parish has experienced robust job growth in construction and extraction (+38% since 2019) occupations. Manufacturing is a standout sector, with high employment concentration in the energy sector (6.17) with standout specializations in mineral products and chemical manufacturing supported by major employers like Syrah Graphite and BASF. A recent \$107 million federal loan for Syrah Graphite's expansion and the presence of Terral River Services highlight the parish's industrial momentum. The parish has also seen strong job growth over the past five years in manufacturing, professional, scientific, and technical services, and mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction, signaling opportunity for continued growth in alignment with the region's target sectors. Tourism also represents an opportunity for economic diversification and growth based on the parish's proximity to Natchez and its location along the Mississippi River.

As of 2024, the parish's population declined by 10% since 2019, falling by 1,929 residents. Population is expected to decrease by 8.3% between 2024 and 2029. The labor force participation rate has remained relatively stable, hovering around 50.9% in 2024. Total jobs have remained flat, with a slight dip from 6,172 in 2019 to 6,143 in 2024.

ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

Target Sector

Alignment:

Agribusiness and Wood
Products and Energy

TOP SECTORS

Concordia Parish's largest sectors by total GRP contribution. These sectors form the core of the parish's economic base, representing the majority of its output.

SECTOR	2024 GRP
Government	\$102,535,941
Retail Trade	\$74,958,198
Wholesale Trade	\$71,018,101
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$60,628,166
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	\$59,877,756

TOP INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Concordia Parish's top regional clusters. These clusters denote where the parish has strong economic performance and competitive advantages relative to national benchmarks.

CLUSTER	SCORE
Distribution and Electronic Commerce	77
Upstream Chemical Products	63
Agriculture Inputs and Services	58
Food Processing and Manufacturing	54
Printing Services	51

ADVANTAGES

Concordia Parish benefits from its strategic location on the Mississippi River, offering riverfront sites and logistics potential that support its chemical and mineral processing industries. The parish has a highly productive agricultural base in cotton and soybeans and possesses unique assets like its hydroelectric plant that stakeholders view as an underutilized competitive advantage.

BARRIERS

Attracting and retaining young families is a major challenge, with stakeholders citing a need for better recreational amenities and opportunities for children. Infrastructure expansion is also critical; there is a strong desire for improved rail access and a four-lane highway to attract larger employers. Additionally, small business owners report needing more support in training and infrastructure to survive and scale.

GRANT PARISH



With a total GRP (2024) of \$506.3 million, the Grant Parish economy is anchored by government, manufacturing, and construction. The parish has seen impressive job growth in arts, entertainment, and recreation (+43%), bolstered by the Jena Choctaw Pines Casino, also a key driver of the high employment concentration (3.54) in this sector. The wood products sector is a dominant private employer, with veneer and plywood manufacturing showing an employment concentration of 781.23.

As of 2024, the parish population declined by 2.2% since 2019, falling by 493 residents. Population is expected to decrease slightly (-2.1%) between 2024 and 2029. Labor force participation improved from 54.3% in 2020 to 56.2% in 2024. Total jobs have remained stable, increasing slightly from 4,108 in 2019 to 4,151 in 2024.

ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

Target Sector Alignment:
Agribusiness and Wood Products

TOP SECTORS

Grant Parish's largest sectors by total GRP contribution. These sectors form the core of the parish's economic base, representing the majority of its output.

SECTOR	2024 GRP
Government	\$206,345,306
Manufacturing	\$54,243,509
Construction	\$39,206,468
Retail Trade	\$31,530,549

TOP INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Grant Parish's top regional clusters. These clusters denote where the parish has strong economic performance and competitive advantages relative to national benchmarks.

CLUSTER	SCORE
Wood Products	94
Federal Government Services	92
Transportation and Logistics	57

ADVANTAGES

Grant Parish is centrally located with strong north-south connectivity via U.S. Highway 167, supporting its manufacturing and logistics sectors. The parish is rich in natural resources, with the Kisatchie National Forest covering a third of its land, supporting both timber industries and outdoor tourism. The recent expansion of fiber broadband through federal funds represents a critical improvement for digital infrastructure.

BARRIERS

Sales tax leakage is a significant issue, as residents often travel to neighboring parishes for basic shopping, including groceries. High millage tax rates are a concern for businesses, and stakeholders note a lack of a central economic development organization to coordinate growth efforts. Additionally, utility capacity limits and the inclusion of prison populations in census counts (distorting funding eligibility) are viewed as key hurdles.

LASALLE PARISH



With a total GRP (2024) of \$545.7 million, the LaSalle Parish economy is anchored by government, manufacturing, and the energy sector. The oil and gas extraction industry remains a major strength, contributing \$67 million to GRP, while manufacturing is driven by sawmills and wood preservation. Major economic drivers include the Drax biomass facility, which generates nearly \$200 million annual economic impact, and LaSalle Lumber, a longstanding business and significant employer in wood product manufacturing.

As of 2024, the parish population remained flat, decreasing by only 46 residents since 2019. Notably, the population is projected to grow by 1.4% between 2024 and 2029. However, labor force participation has declined from 58.4% in 2020 to 54.4% in 2024. Total jobs decreased slightly from 5,333 in 2019 to 5,210 in 2024.

ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

Target Sector

Alignment:

Agribusiness and Wood
Products and Energy

TOP SECTORS

LaSalle Parish's largest sectors by total GRP contribution. These sectors form the core of the parish's economic base, representing the majority of its output.

SECTOR	2024 GRP
Government	\$101,696,923
Manufacturing	\$73,552,990
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	\$67,158,010
Retail Trade	\$49,554,765
Wholesale Trade	\$47,117,112

TOP INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

LaSalle Parish's top regional clusters. These clusters denote where the parish has strong economic performance and competitive advantages relative to national benchmarks.

CLUSTER	SCORE
Wood Products	81
Oil and Gas Production and Transportation	56
Forestry	48
Local Utilities	41

ADVANTAGES

LaSalle Parish possesses an abundant natural resource base of timber, oil, and gas, supported by an experienced industrial workforce. The presence of major employers like Drax, Hardtner Medical Center, and UPS Midstream Services provides a stable economic foundation. The parish also benefits from an active economic development organization in the LaSalle Economic Development District.

BARRIERS

Stakeholders emphasize the risk of overreliance on the oil and gas industry and the need for industry diversification. A significant shortage of childcare options and quality housing creates barriers for working families and talent attraction. Additionally, small businesses report a need for greater support in marketing and customer reach to remain sustainable.

NATCHITOCHES PARISH



With a total GRP (2024) of \$1.71 billion, the Natchitoches Parish economy is anchored by manufacturing, government, and retail. Manufacturing is the parish's primary sector (\$548 million GRP), led by paperboard mills and plywood manufacturing. The parish has seen remarkable growth in architecture and engineering jobs (+68% since 2019) and management occupations (+43%). Key assets include Northwestern State University (NSU), the Port of Natchitoches, and major industrial employers like Alliance Compressors and RoyOMartin.

As of 2024, the parish population declined by 5.8% since 2019, falling by 2,216 residents. Population is expected to decrease by 4.2% between 2024 and 2029. Labor force participation has improved significantly, rising from 46.9% in 2020 to 51.6% in 2024. Total jobs increased from 15,358 in 2019 to 16,395 in 2024, a 6.7% gain.

ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

Target Sector Alignment:

Agribusiness and Wood Products, Energy target sectors, and Aerospace and Defense

TOP SECTORS

Natchitoches Parish's largest sectors by total GRP contribution. These sectors form the core of the parish's economic base, representing the majority of its output.

SECTOR	2024 GRP
Manufacturing	\$548,102,300
Government	\$290,552,549
Retail Trade	\$131,504,121
Finance and Insurance	\$81,276,837

TOP INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Natchitoches Parish's top regional clusters. These clusters denote where the parish has strong economic performance and competitive advantages relative to national benchmarks.

CLUSTER	SCORE
Livestock Processing	100
Paper and Packaging	65
Local Education and Training	64
Downstream Chemical Products	56
Construction Products and Services	50

ADVANTAGES

Natchitoches Parish is a regional innovation hub that leverages the workforce pipeline from NSU. The university's new investments in nursing and allied health programs signal an opportunity for an improved healthcare workforce pipeline. The parish features robust industrial infrastructure, including the Port of Natchitoches and rail-served sites, supporting major expansions by Alliance Compressors (\$45 million). The parish's historic downtown and Dark Woods Adventure Park also anchor a vibrant tourism economy.

BARRIERS

Housing shortages are a critical issue, with stakeholders noting that young professionals struggle to find affordable rentals. "Ease of doing business" is perceived as poor due to permitting obstacles and inconsistent regulatory requirements. Furthermore, despite job availability, there is a disconnect between job seekers and employers, requiring better workforce alignment systems.

RAPIDES PARISH



With a total GRP (2024) of \$6.54 billion, the Rapides Parish economy serves as the region's primary economic driver, anchored by government, healthcare, and manufacturing. The parish also serves as a regional medical hub, with high specialization in hospital and physician services. Job growth has been steady in computer and mathematical occupations (+24%) and arts and media (+21%). Significant recent announcements include SunGas Renewables' \$1.8 billion clean fuel facility and expansions by Proctor & Gamble (\$96 million) and Ucore (\$75 million).

As of 2024, the parish population declined by 3.4% since 2019, falling by 4,421 residents. Population is expected to decrease by 3.6% between 2024 and 2029. Labor force participation has slowly increased from 57.3% in 2020 to 58.8% in 2024. Total jobs remained stable, with 63,508 jobs in 2024 compared to 63,609 in 2019.

ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

Target Sector Alignment:

Energy, Agribusiness
and Wood Products, and
Aerospace and Defense

TOP SECTORS

Rapides Parish's largest sectors by total GRP contribution. These sectors form the core of the parish's economic base, representing the majority of its output.

SECTOR	2024 GRP
Government	\$1,166,856,415
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$931,723,368
Manufacturing	\$779,158,590
Retail Trade	\$652,218,914
Construction	\$392,931,746

TOP INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Rapides Parish's top regional clusters. These clusters denote where the parish has strong economic performance and competitive advantages relative to national benchmarks.

CLUSTER	SCORE
Federal Government Services	87
Downstream Chemical Products	75
Electric Power Generation and Transmission	75
Wood Products	69
State Government Services	58

ADVANTAGES

Rapides Parish is the commercial and healthcare hub for the entire region, anchored by CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital and Rapides Regional Medical Center and a deep network of medical services. The parish is also home to a leading connectivity network, including the Alexandria International Airport (AEX), the strategically vital England Airpark (a major redeveloped brownfield site), the Central Louisiana Regional Port, and the intersection of Interstate 49 and U.S. Highway 71. This ecosystem, combined with the workforce pipeline from LSUA, CLTCC, and NSU's campus at England Airpark, provides a strong foundation for rapid growth in healthcare, aviation and defense, advanced manufacturing, and energy, which is already evidenced by massive industrial investments from SunGas and Ucore.

BARRIERS

Rapides is the region's economic anchor; however, it still faces challenges that actively hinder talent attraction and retention efforts. Some stakeholders point to a self-perpetuating negative image held by residents as a deterrent for attracting and retaining young professionals and families. These issues are accelerated by income inequality and a trend of outmigration. These challenges strain the available workforce pipeline, limit the parish's ability to fully capitalize on major industrial investments, and slow broader economic momentum.

VERNON PARISH



With a total GRP (2024) of \$2.82 billion, the Vernon Parish economy is dominated by the government sector (\$1.85 billion), driven primarily by Fort Polk. The parish has seen a 39% surge in healthcare support jobs and steady growth in manufacturing (+60%) and construction (+21%) sector employment. Manufacturing is a growing secondary sector, highlighted by Koppers' recent \$17 million investment to build a new utility pole peeling and drying facility in Leesville.

As of 2024, the parish's population declined by 5.2% since 2019, falling by 2,497 residents. Population is expected to decrease by 3.5% between 2024 and 2029. Labor force participation has improved, rising from 53.2% in 2020 to 57.2% in 2024. Total jobs remained steady at roughly 22,000.

ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

**Target Sector
Alignment:**
Aerospace
and Defense

TOP SECTORS

Vernon Parish's largest sectors by total GRP contribution. These sectors form the core of the parish's economic base, representing the majority of its output.

SECTOR	2024 GRP
Government	\$1,852,711,539
Retail Trade	\$132,388,838
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$119,139,534
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	\$117,564,780

TOP INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Vernon Parish's top regional clusters. These clusters denote where the parish has strong economic performance and competitive advantages relative to national benchmarks.

CLUSTER	SCORE
Federal Government Services	89
Furniture	70
Business Services	63
Local Utilities	57
Construction Products and Services	49

ADVANTAGES

Vernon Parish's economy is anchored by Fort Polk, which provides a massive, recession-resistant economic base and a pool of skilled veterans and military spouses. The parish has successfully attracted new industrial investment, such as the Koppers facility, and has recently established a new Economic Development District to further these efforts. Affordable living and the strong community fabric of Leesville are also cited as key strengths.

BARRIERS

Stakeholders caution against overreliance on Fort Polk and emphasize the need for economic diversification. Workforce retention is a challenge, particularly with military spouses and veterans leaving the area for other opportunities. There is also a strong desire for infrastructure improvements and beautification to make the parish more appealing to businesses and residents.

WINN PARISH



With a total GRP (2024) of \$490.3 million, the Winn Parish economy is anchored by manufacturing (\$119.8 million), which is its largest private sector. This manufacturing strength is centered on the wood products industry, where Weyerhaeuser and West Fraser Timber operate major facilities. Weyerhaeuser recently invested \$96.2 million in a modernization project, securing the parish's position as a forestry hub.

As of 2024 the region's population declined by 5.7% since 2019, falling by 797. Population is expected to decrease by 2.1% between 2024 and 2029. From 2019 to 2024, jobs declined by 2.5% in Winn Parish, LA from 5,047 to 4,921. Labor force participation has remained remarkably steady (52.1% in 2020 and 51.3% in 2025).

ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

Target Sector Alignment:
Agribusiness and Wood Products

TOP SECTORS

Winn Parish's largest sectors by total GRP contribution. These sectors form the core of the parish's economic base, representing the majority of its output.

SECTOR	2024 GRP
Manufacturing	\$119,794,151
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$79,027,445
Government	\$64,855,653
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	\$47,159,047

TOP INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Winn Parish's top regional clusters. These clusters denote where the parish has strong economic performance and competitive advantages relative to national benchmarks.

CLUSTER	SCORE
Wood Products	75
Local Government Services	67
Plastics	67
Forestry	41

ADVANTAGES

Winn Parish benefits from a highly concentrated wood products cluster, due in large part to its extensive (80.7%) forest coverage, anchored by major sawmills and preservation facilities that drive the local economy. The Weyerhaeuser modernization project demonstrates long-term industrial commitment to the area. Recent infrastructure improvements, specifically the replacement of five bridges by DOTD, have improved freight mobility for timber and heavy industry. A recent \$28 million investment in the new Winn Community Health Center is an advancement for the region and key step toward increasing access to healthcare services.

BARRIERS

The economic outlook for Winn Parish is challenged by a critical lack of diversification. While the parish has robust, specialized clusters in wood products and healthcare, its heavy reliance on these few sectors creates vulnerability. Growth in other, higher-value industries will be essential for ensuring the parish's long-term viability and resilience. This is complicated by workforce challenges. The talent pool is constrained by a low educational attainment rate (9.4% below the national average). This skill mismatch creates a clear barrier to attracting companies that require a highly educated professional workforce. Stakeholders noted that larger employers often hire skilled individuals who commute from surrounding metropolitan areas. This results in a significant leakage of disposable income and spending power, which hinders small business growth and makes retaining local talent a hurdle.

MOVING FORWARD



Central Louisiana is both excited and energized for what comes next for our regional economy – that much was clear in the dozens of meetings and engagement with hundreds of stakeholders across the region through the process that informed this plan. With this strategic plan as our roadmap, we are ready to elevate Louisiana Central and our regional economy to new heights.



Our commitment to partnership and on-the-ground engagement is only just beginning. Starting this process with our ten-parish “We Make Good Stuff” economic development roadshow provided our team with invaluable insight into the unique assets, opportunities, and challenges within each parish. This engagement revealed exactly what is required to move the needle and drive impactful engagement across our footprint. Looking forward, our commitment remains steadfast: we are coming back. We are dedicated to being present in every parish to be the resource each of our parishes and stakeholders need from their regional economic development organization – providing tailored support, programs, services, and resources that help drive positive economic growth and align with the most specific pressing needs for our local communities.

We have outlined key metrics in this plan, which will guide how we measure and share our progress. Expect consistent updates on implementation: we want to keep you informed not only about what has been accomplished, but also about what lies ahead. This is a plan for our entire region, and we invite all partners and stakeholders to join us on this journey – staying engaged, connected, and informed. With renewed energy and optimism for Central Louisiana’s future, we know our region is ready to reach new heights. Louisiana Central is prepared to lead with vision and foster coordination and alignment with the partners and stakeholders across the region who share a vested interest in our economic success. Together, we will elevate Central Louisiana.



APPENDIX A

LED STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

LED's statewide strategic plan contains three major areas of focus, offering opportunities for close alignment between our regional efforts and state priorities.

- **Priority sectors**, which guide areas of focus for business development, expansion, and retention.
 - **Five pillars of prosperity**, which include focus areas critical to the execution of strategic priorities and attraction of economic growth.
 - **Signature initiatives**, which are key actions the state will take to support and advance these pillars of prosperity that lead to positive statewide impact.
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FIVE PILLARS OF PROSPERITY

- **Ease of doing business:** Position Louisiana to compete and win by making it the easiest and best place to do business.
- **High wage employment:** Ensure every Louisianan has the opportunity for proud and ever-growing wages.
- **Thriving regions:** Create thriving regions that attract and retain talent and are continually capitalizing on opportunities.
- **Asset industries:** Optimize Louisiana's asset industries for growth and innovation to lead in the future as they have in the past.
- **Global impact:** Drive Louisiana's business ecosystem toward global impact.

LED TARGET SECTORS

- **Energy and process industries:** prioritizes an all-of-the-above approach to energy production, including LNG, oil and gas, nuclear power, and carbon management.
- **Logistics and distribution:** prioritizes manufacturing and services supporting ports and maritime freight, warehousing, and transportation equipment and heavy machinery.
- **Aerospace and defense:** prioritizes the pursuit of ship, instrument, and propulsion unit building and manufacturing.
- **Agribusiness:** prioritizes value-added production, especially across rural economies, and innovation in ag-tech integration and innovative energy opportunities.
- **Professional services:** prioritizes companies offering services such as engineering, data management and collection, or general operations management.
- **Life sciences:** prioritizes companies pursuing medical device or pharmaceutical manufacturing and biotech research and development.
- **Technology:** prioritizes companies pursuing robotics and industrial controls, IoT software, or cybersecurity.



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