

The Southwest Louisiana
Economic Development Alliance
2024
Annual Report





New Leadership:

Scott Walker **President / CEO** **Chamber SWLA** **SWLA Economic** **Development Alliance**

The Chamber SWLA / SWLA Economic Development Alliance welcomes Scott A. Walker as the new President and CEO. Walker will assume the role on February 10, 2025, and will be responsible for guiding the organization through its next phase of growth and further advancing economic development in Southwest Louisiana.

Walker brings over 20 years of leadership experience in economic development, business management, and community collaboration. He has a proven track record of driving significant economic growth, creating jobs, and fostering partnerships that have helped transform communities. Walker's background in organizational leadership and economic development, combined with his expertise in business strategy, financial management, and talent attraction, makes him an ideal fit to lead Alliance.

Background and Key Achievements:

President and CEO, Greater Lafayette Commerce, Lafayette, Indiana, (2015-Present): Walker built and led a highly successful economic development department, securing over \$2.5 billion in investment and the creation of more than 5,000 new jobs. He developed innovative talent attraction programs and led major strategic initiatives that positively impacted the region's workforce and business climate.

Chief Executive Officer, Midland Tomorrow, Midland, Michigan, (2004-2014): Walker led Midland Tomorrow in attracting over \$1 billion in new investments and creating more than 2,000 jobs. He also launched a \$17 million redevelopment initiative and developed a SmartZone to foster innovation and entrepreneurial growth.

Six Sigma Black Belt & Senior Account Manager, TRW Chassis Systems, Detroit, Michigan, (1995-2004): Walker's career began in the automotive industry, where he led Six Sigma projects and successfully negotiated multi-million-dollar contracts with major corporations like General Motors, achieving a company record in gross profit margins.



Liz Deville
Executive Vice President
ldeville@allianceswla.org



Michelle McInnis
Senior Vice President,
mmcinnis@allianceswla.org



Eric Cormier
SVP, Entrepreneurship and
Strategic Initiatives
ecormier@allianceswla.org



Paula Ramsey
VP, Chamber
pramsey@allianceswla.org



Amanda White
VP, Communications
& Special Projects
awhite@allianceswla.org



Pam Breau
Financial Manager
pbreaux@allianceswla.org



Gus Fontenot, CLED
Director of Projects & Site
Development
gfontenot@allianceswla.org



Heather LeJeune
Event Director
hlejeune@allianceswla.org



Randi Mack
Account Receivable
Specialist
rmack@allianceswla.org



Dottie Monceaux
Customer Service
Representative
dmonceaux@allianceswla.org

2024 Annual Report



George Swift
Outgoing
President/CEO,
SWLA Economic
Development Alliance

One of the more promising developments in 2024 was the purchase of Tellurian's Driftwood LNG by Woodside Energy Group Ltd of Perth Australia. Woodside is a worldwide energy company and the project will now be known as Woodside Louisiana LNG. Woodside is targeting the final investment decision (FID) in the first quarter of 2025. The facility has all permits and is ready to go. This will involve several thousand construction workers.

Cheniere Energy has filed applications with FERC and the Department of Energy for an expansion at its Sabine Pass terminal.

Lake Charles LNG has selected KTJV, the joint venture between Technip Energies and KBR, for the engineering, procurement, fabrication, and construction of the LNG export terminal project near Lake Charles. The project, which remains subject to Lake Charles LNG making a final investment decision, will convert the import terminal into an export terminal.

The Biden administration placed a pause on LNG projects in January which caused a flat year for new LNG projects. Several facilities can be ready if federal permits are allowed which will result in a transformational economy and another \$50-60 billion in investments in our region. The worldwide demand for LNG is strong so we expect most of these projects to move ahead. We expect with the Trump administration, these projects will be allowed to move forward.

The LNG Center for Excellence at McNeese State University is well under construction and will serve as a thought leader for the liquefied natural gas industry and as a training center for the LNG workforce.

Another development in industry is the purchase of the PPG Lake Charles facility by Qemetica, a Poland-based company. The Lake Charles facility is a silica products business and Qemetica is expected to expand this facility.

Jeff Davis Parish was successful in locating Ice Industries' first manufacturing facility in Louisiana to supply American-made products to First Solar, Inc. in Iberia Parish. The company will invest \$8 million to produce roll-forming steel back rails for solar panels. The company expects to create 70 direct new jobs and 142 indirect new jobs, and will be located in the former Zagis building at Lacassine.

Our region is attempting to move into new energy. Several solar projects are being proposed in the five-parish region. The largest of which is Cajun Crescent Energy Center which was to be located mostly in Calcasieu Parish with about one-sixth of the project in Jeff Davis Parish. The \$440 million facility would have generated 375 megawatts of clean energy, crucial for sustaining and expanding our industrial sector. The project would have generated revenue estimated at \$77 million for Calcasieu Parish and \$11 million for Jeff Davis Parish. Unfortunately, the project was voted down at the Calcasieu Parish Planning and Zoning Board so it appears to be over.

Carbon Sequestration projects are also proposed. Some of the projects are being met with opposition by folks near the facilities and some protestors from outside our region.

If our area is to remain economically strong, we must change and morph into green energy projects. Our existing industries are aware of this and are modifying their facilities. Opposing new, clean energy projects, will hurt us in the future with loss of jobs.



A major highlight of 2024 was the announcement by Governor Jeff Landry that a financial "notice to proceed" was issued for the new Calcasieu River Bridge in Lake Charles. After years of advocacy, The Chamber SWLA is most appreciative to the state for getting this project underway. It will take time as construction is expected to take five to six years.

Dr. Loren Scott, LSU Professor of Economics, Emeritus, in his most recent forecast, projects 3,500 new jobs in the Lake Charles MSA in 2025 and another 4,600 jobs in 2026. This would make Lake Charles MSA the fastest growing MSA in the state in percentage growth. One or two new LNG facilities would make that possible.

In addition to LNG and petrochemical, our area is fortunate to have a strong aviation industry, agriculture and forestry, gaming and hospitality, and robust medical community. We are a diverse region with a stable economy which should only get better in the new few years.

In 2023, the Louisiana Legislature passed a bill to establish the Louisiana Competes Program. This program allocated \$1 million to each of the eight economic development regions in the state. The funds were intended to make improvements on publicly-owned lands for economic development purposes.

Under the program, LED would fund 90% of a project's costs, with the public landowner only required to provide a 10% match. As rules for the program were rolled out in 2024, in Southwest Louisiana, The Alliance worked with local public agencies across all five parishes to identify potential projects that this program could support. The first project out of the gates was to harden the approaches to a new crane pad and bulkhead at West Cal Port in Calcasieu Parish. Other projects included site clearing and clean-up work that is currently underway in Cameron on waterfront property owned by the Cameron Parish Port & Terminal District. Another project that is close to starting is the first phase of asphalt overlay of Bob Odom Parkway at Lacassine Industrial Park in Jeff Davis Parish, with help from the Louisiana Agricultural Financial Authority. Beauregard and Allen parishes are still coordinating with The Alliance to see what projects might be the best use under this program. It is hoped that, as these initial funds are exhausted, the Louisiana Legislature will continue to dedicate future funds for site improvement and economic development efforts.

Healthcare is a major sector in our region and a new state-of-the-art hospital recently opened in Allen Parish providing those in Allen a convenient healthcare center.

The Coshatta Tribe of Louisiana is expanding their casino resort with construction of a new hotel on the property.

The downtown skyline changed dramatically with the implosion of the 21-story Capital One Tower which was damaged beyond repair by Hurricanes Laura and Delta. The Port Wonder Children's Museum and Wildlife Center will open on the lakefront along with the first restaurant, Crying Eagle.

Plans were also announced for a hotel at the Lake Charles Civic Center, now known as the Event Center, along with a new amphitheater and meeting facility on the former Capital One property.

This year has been one of transition as I leave the Alliance after 20 years. As I pass the torch, I'm thrilled to welcome Scott Walker as the new CEO of the Alliance. Scott comes to us from the Lafayette, Indiana Chamber of Commerce, where his leadership has been nothing short of transformative. With a proven track record in fostering business growth and community engagement, Scott's vision aligns perfectly with the mission and values of our organization. No doubt Scott will take the Alliance to new heights, continuing to strengthen our region and build on the foundation that has been established together.

Scott's background in economic development, coupled with his passion for collaboration, makes him the ideal person to lead the Alliance into its next chapter. I encourage everyone in the region to join me in extending him a warm Southwest Louisiana welcome.

As he begins his tenure on February 10, let's offer our support and enthusiasm for the exciting opportunities ahead. Hopefully, he will enjoy the same support from our board and elected officials as I have. I wish The Alliance the very best.

Chamber & Foundation Executive Board



Janie Fruge
2024-25 Chair



Jason Guillory
Past Chair



Ronnie Petree
Governmental Affairs



Velika Hurst-Trahan
Business Development
& Inclusion



Matt Koch
Education & Workforce



Jill Galmarini
Quality of Life



Matt Redd
Growth & Development



Mark Peters
Industrial Development



Jay Caldwell
Legal Counsel



Kirk Pellerin
Treasurer

1-Year Terms to Expire 12/25

- Allyson Montgomery, Children's Museum of SWLA
- Joanne Sovereign, Qemetica
-

Terms to Expire 12/25

- Kristy Armand, Healthy Image/Thrive
- Blake Brignac, Woods Brignac Wealth Management
- Austin Broussard, Broussard Group
- Barry Brown, Red River Bank
- Bridget Evans, Champeaux, Evans, & Hotard
- Paul Grigg, Coca-Cola Bottling Company
- Tuwanna Guillory-August, Allstate-Tuwanna Guillory-August Agency
- Matt Koch, CSE Federal Credit Union
- Jennifer Spees, Louisiana Mortgage
- Greg Thibodeaux, Turner Industries

Terms Expire 12/26

- Ernie Broussard, HGA
- Tara Demarie, Century 21 Bessette Realty
- Tonya Griffith, Griffith Financial, Wells Fargo
- Sarah Hughes, SASOL
- Steve Parker, Lotte Chemical Company
- Steven Perez, First Horizon Bank
- Ronnie Petree, The Bank
- Angela Queenan, Global Crane & Rigging
- Todd Stewart, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
- Angelo Torre, Louisiana Spirits/Bayou Rum

Terms to Expire 12/27

- Greg Hennagin, Golden Nugget
- Velika Hurst-Trahan, Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Armando Lara, LyondellBasell
- Stuart Moss, Credit Services of Southwest Louisiana
- Sterling Neblett, CITGO
- Sarita Scheufens, Safety Council of Southwest Louisiana
- Kathryn Shirley, Amerisafe
- Wendy Stine, Stine, Inc.
- Calvin Thibodeaux, Entergy
- Scot Tyler, Phillips66

Designated Board Seats

- Taylor Beard Stanley Fusion Five
- Terra Jones, Leadership SWLA
- Jill Galmarini, Quality of Life Task Forces
- TBA, Arts & Humanities Council of SWLA
- Dr. Wade Rousse McNeese State University
- Dr. Neil Aspinwall, SOWELA Technical Community College

Courtesy Seats

- TBA, Jeff Davis Chamber of Commerce
- Jay DeLouche, DeQuincy Chamber of Commerce
- Lisa Adams, Greater Beauregard Chamber of Commerce
- Lena McArthur, West Calcasieu Chamber of Commerce
- Jennifer Clinton, Oakdale Chamber of Commerce
- Emily Larche, Junior League of Lake Charles
- Barbara Savant, Kinder Chamber of Commerce

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- Brian Abshire of the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury
 - Katie Armentor of the Cameron Parish Police Jury
 - Ann Barilleaux of JD Bank
 - Doug Boudreaux of Centerpoint Energy
 - Ken Broussard of Broussard Group
 - David Brosset of Brosset Architect, LLC
 - Parker Cole of HGA
 - Damon Cooly of Beauregard Parish Police Jury
 - Jeff Davis of BI Bank
 - Matt Fontenot of Allen Parish Police Jury
 - Natalie Graham of CSRS
 - Tyson Grenzebach of Landlocked Aviation Services
 - Zach Hager of Entergy
 - Mayor Henry Guinn of Jennings
 - Mike Heinen of Jeff Davis Electric Co-Op
 - Devon Hyde of Lake Charles Memorial Health System
 - Bruce Kirkpatrick of Stream Companies
 - Cameron Landry of Lake Charles Harbor & Terminal District
 - Mayor Hal McMillin of Westlake
 - Chad Miller of Southwest Louisiana Credit Union
 - Kim Montie of Cameron Parish Port
 - Ryan Navarre of Navarre Auto Group
 - Kristian Poncho of Coushatta Casino Resort
 - Glenn Pumpelly of Pumpelly Oil, Inc.
 - John Nichols of First National Bank of DeRidder (FNBD)
 - Acting Mayor Randy Larken of DeRidder
 - TBA, Jeff Davis Economic Development
 - Cody Stroud of Triad Electric
 - Keith Thompson of Northrop Grumman
 - Stevie Trahan of Cameron LNG / Semptra
 - Mayor David Vidrine of Oakdale
 - Sam Wilkinson of First Federal Bank

*Terms are one-year appointments

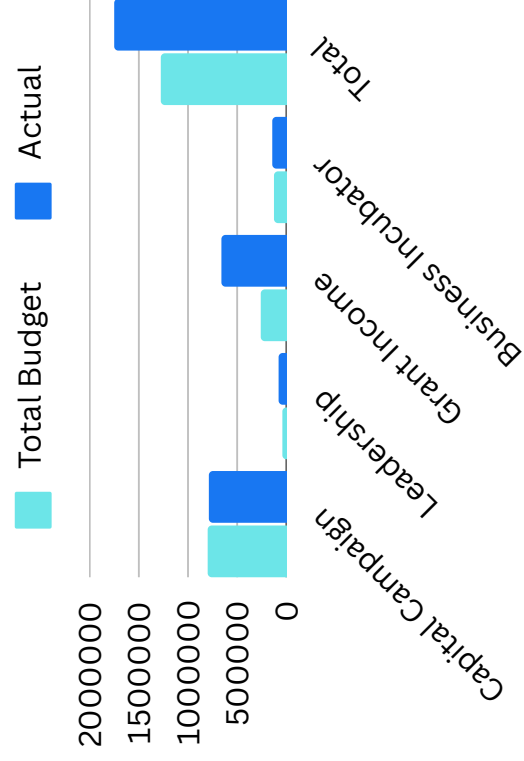


Long-Term Chamber SWLA Members

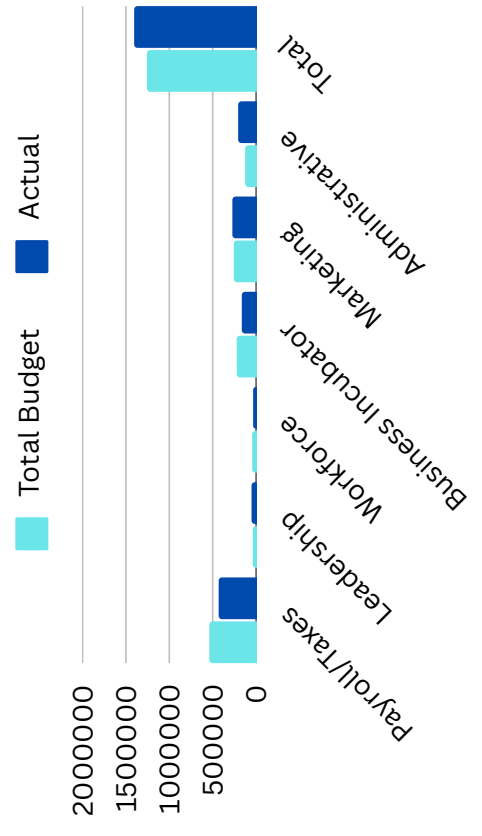
- 130 Years! – American Press
- 118 Years! – Lake Charles Coca-Cola Bottling
- 117 Years! – CHRISTUS Ochsner St. Patrick
- 105 Years! – PWK Timberland, LLC
- 96 Years – Lacassine Company, Inc.
- 91 Years – Arxada
- 90 Years: The Bel Group; Capital One Bank; Entergy; Scofield, Gerard, Pohorelsky, Gallagher & Landry; and Stockwell Sievert, Viccellio, Clements, & Shaddock
- 89 Years: CenterPoint Energy & Insurance Unlimited
- 85 Years: United Way of Southwest Louisiana
- 83 Years: Phillips 66 Lake Charles Manufacturing
- 82 Years: CITGO Petroleum Corporation
- 81 Years: Dunham Price Group, Firestone Polymers, and R.E. Heidt Construction
- 79 Years: Schlesinger's Wholesalers
- 77 Years: Reinauer Real Estate Corporation
- 76 Years: First Federal Bank of Louisiana & McElroy, Quirk & Burch
- 75 Years: Hixson Funeral Home/2585
- 73 Years: McKenzie Pest Control and W.R. Grace
- 71 Years: KPLC/Gray Media Group
- 70 Years: D.W. Jessen & Associates & Qemetica (formerly PPG Silica)
- 69 Years: Imperial Health
- 67 Years: Better Business Bureau Serving SWLA & Pumpelly Oil, A Reladyne Company
- 66 Years: Lake Charles Rubber & Gasket
- 64 Years: Brask, Inc – IEE, and Livingston Group, LLC
- 62 Years: Lamar Advertising Company & Visit Lake Charles
- 61 Years: Southwest Beverage Company
- 60 Years: Howell Industries, Inc.
- 59 Years: The Pathology Laboratory
- 58 Years: Bolton Ford; Coburn's; Farmers Rice Milling Company; Jones, Tete, Fonti & Belfour; Lake Charles Memorial Health System; The Pioneer Club; Plache, Smith, & Nieset; Pumpelly Tire Center; Setpoint Integration Solutions; and Sweet Lake Land & Oil Company



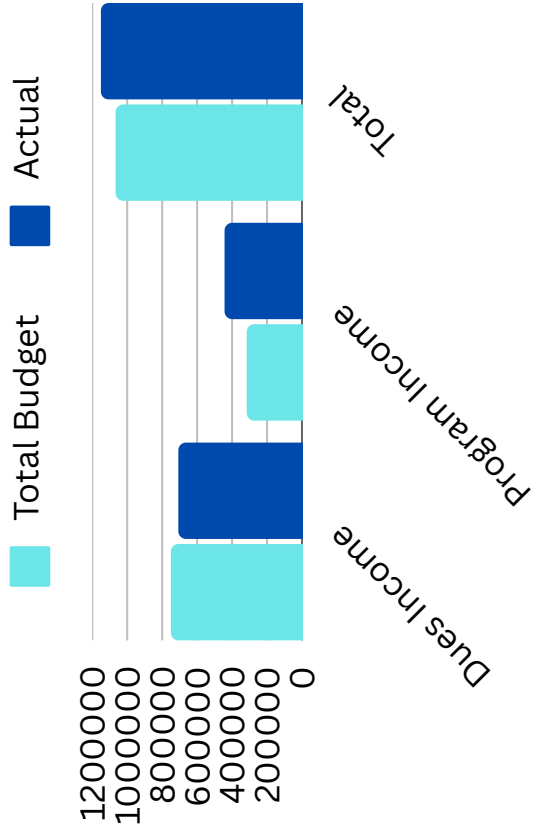
2024 Revenue: Budget Vs. Actual



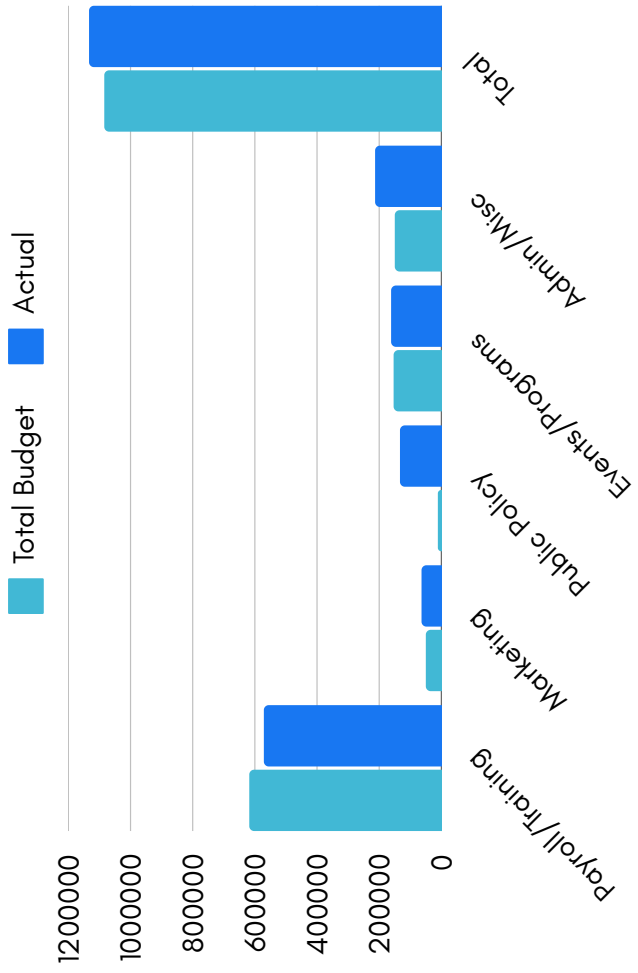
2024 Expenses: Budget Vs. Actual



2024 Revenue: Budget Vs. Actual



2024 Expenses: Budget Vs. Actual





CHAMBER
SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA

2025 Budget

Public Support & Revenue

Dues.....	\$760,000.00
Interest Income.....	\$7,000.00
Miscellaneous Income.....	\$10,000.00
	\$777,000.00

Program & Publication Revenue

Annual Banquet.....	\$135,000.00
Annual Golf Tournament.....	\$50,000.00
	\$185,000.00

Project & Committee Revenue

Business After Hours.....	\$12,000.00
SWLA Day at the Legislature.....	\$13,000.00
Public Policy Income.....	\$10,000.00
Women's Business Network.....	\$1,500.00
Impact Luncheons.....	\$30,000.00
LegisGator Luncheon.....	\$182,500.00
	\$239,000.00

Total Revenue: \$1,201,000.00

General & Administrative Expense

Audit & Accounting Fees.....	\$19,500.00
Bank Fees.....	\$10,000.00
Depreciation.....	\$800.00
Dues.....	\$7,500.00
Employee Benefits.....	\$85,500.00
Incentives & Commissions.....	\$35,000.00
Information Technology.....	\$7,000.00
Insurance (Liability & Workers).....	\$5,000.00
Office Supplies & Expense.....	\$20,000.00
Payroll Taxes.....	\$40,000.00
Payroll Expense.....	\$2,500.00
Postage.....	\$3,500.00
Rent Expense.....	\$22,000.00
Salaries.....	\$470,000.00
Staff Training.....	\$10,000.00
Telephone.....	\$10,000.00
Travel & Registration.....	\$5,000.00
Vehicle Expense.....	\$16,000.00
	\$769,300.00

Program & Publication Expense

Annual Banquet.....	\$55,000.00
Annual Golf Tournament.....	\$23,000.00
Member Relations.....	\$5,000.00
Marketing & Membership Dev.....	\$50,000.00
	\$133,000.00

Project & Committee Expense

Business After Hours.....	\$2,000.00
SWLA Day at the Legislature.....	\$10,000.00
Executive Committee Expense.....	\$1,000.00
Board of Directors Expense.....	\$3,000.00
Public Policy Expense.....	\$185,000.00
LegisGator Expense.....	\$65,000.00
Impact Luncheons.....	\$22,500.00
Women's Business Network.....	\$3,000.00
	\$192,000.00

Total Expense: \$1,193,800.00

Net Operating Income (Loss): \$7,200.00



2025 Budget

Public Support & Revenue

Interest Income.....	\$2,500.00
SEED Center Rental Income.....	\$20,000.00
SEED Income.....	\$130,000.00
IMCAL Rental Income.....	\$30,000.00
Tier 1 Grant (Admin).....	\$135,000.00
Disaster Supplement Grant.....	\$200,000.00
	\$517,500.00

Project & Committee Revenue

SWLA On the Move	\$800,000.00
Leadership SWLA.....	\$38,500.00
Miscellaneous Income.....	\$5,000.00
	\$843,500.00

Total Revenue: \$1,361,000.00

General & Administrative Expense

Audit & Accounting Fees.....	\$20,000.00
Bank Fees.....	\$3,500.00
Contract Labor.....	\$20,000.00
Depreciation.....	\$10,000.00
Dues.....	\$3,000.00
Employee Benefits.....	\$57,000.00
Incentives & Commissions.....	\$10,000.00
Information Technology.....	\$3,000.00
Insurance (BOD/Liability).....	\$4,000.00
Office Supplies & Expense.....	\$25,000.00
Payroll Taxes.....	\$45,000.00
Postage.....	\$800.00
Rent & Facility Expense.....	\$8,400.00
IMCAL Rent.....	\$13,500.00
Salaries.....	\$385,000.00
Staff Training.....	\$4,500.00
Telephone.....	\$6,000.00
Travel & Registration.....	\$3,000.00
Vehicle Expense.....	\$4,500.00
	\$626,200.00

Program & Publication Expense

Marketing & Promotion.....	\$90,000.00
Research Expense.....	\$5,000.00
	\$95,000.00

Project & Committee Expense

Economic Development.....	\$90,000.00
Regional Coalitions.....	\$15,000.00
MSU/Economist Expense.....	\$30,000.00
SEED Center Support.....	\$95,000.00
Business Incubator.....	\$150,000.00
Investor Relations.....	\$30,000.00
Workforce Development.....	\$40,000.00
Committee Expense.....	\$1,000.00
Board of Directors.....	\$2,500.00
Executive Committee.....	\$500.00
Leadership.....	\$33,000.00
	\$487,000.00

Total Expense: \$1,208,200.00

Net Operating Income: \$152,800.00

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 Progress



Quality of Life: Supporting the Just Imagine Campaign

To solidify the Alliance's support of the Just Imagine project, Jill Galmarini has been selected to be the Vice Chair of Quality of Life, serving on the Executive Board.



The Better Bayou Project has not taken place as we are awaiting the installation of the kayak launch on the grounds of the SEED Center.

The remaining funds in the Quality of Life Fund at the Community Foundation were donated to the Bayou Greenbelt project.



Quality of Life: Keep Louisiana Beautiful

The Chamber SWLA has partnered with Keep Louisiana Beautiful as the regional coordinator of their Clean Biz Partnership, and attended their Annual Conference.

We have also formed an informal group between the City of Lake Charles' Team Green lead and the Pick It Up Calcasieu lead to support each others programs and events.

Amanda White is also an active member of Team Green and is working with the group on Mardi Gras litter abatement efforts.



Workforce Development: Early Career Education

Administrations from Public, Private and Charter schools are involved in the Education & Workforce Committee that meets monthly do share discussion on topics relevant to both education and training providers and the businesses who need employees.

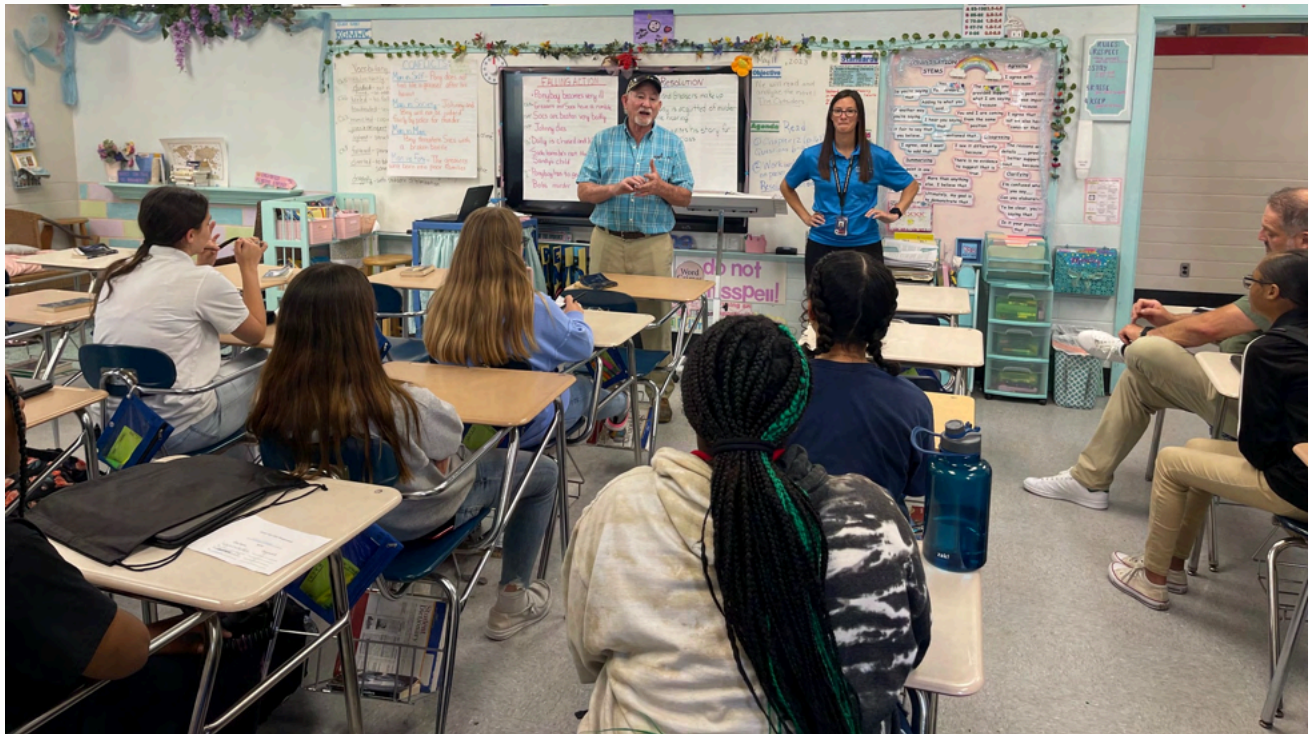
8th Graders at FK White & SP Arnett Middle Schools were linked with over 40 professions from our area and were able to talk about career choices. In total, over 400 8th graders and over 60 employers participated.

Participated in the West Cal Chamber's Master your Future Conference

Region V STEM Center presented to the Ed & WF Committee and \$34,670 of funds designated to Education from the Foundation was donated to the center.

Partnered with McNeese State University to hold Fall and Spring Intern Soirees for students with over 400 students and 200 employees attending

Partnered with Imperial Calcasieu SHRM, School Board and McNeese/Sowela to provide mock interviews, career choices and workforce development programs.



Workforce Development: Workforce Training

Customer Service Training has been provided to businesses both at the SEED Center, as well as AMERSIAFE, BECi , Catholic Charities and other locations throughout our region. Over 60 classes were conducted, training over 1100 employees.

The Leadership SW Program offers professional development for rising leaders in the workforce in SWLA. This very competitive program receives almost double the amount of applications each August, then the amount of spots in the class. The Class of 2024 will graduate on November 14th, and the Class of 2025 will begin in January. The program has over 900 Alumni and has been active since 1984.

The LSW program also contributes to other areas of our strategic plan. The Class of 2022 finally completed their class project with funds from Tellurian, now Woodside, and helped to complete the Nellie Lutcher Park Mural to enhance the quality of life in our region.



Governmental Affairs & Infrastructure

After years of effort, a new Calcasieu River Bridge is now underway.

On March 26, we released our legislative agenda which advocated for tax reform, greater infrastructure (including dredging the Calcasieu Ship Channel), and human services.

Our members have heard from our legislators at the LegisGator and Southwest Louisiana Day in Baton Rouge. We have also hosted statewide and Federal policy makers including Richard Nelson, Secretary of Louisiana Department of Revenue.

We have also advocated on behalf of our growing LNG industry on February 2, 2024 before the "House Energy Committee Energy, Climate, and Grid Security Subcommittee hearing, "Politics Over People: How Biden's LNG Export Ban Threatens America's Energy and Economic Security."



"When the administration announced its decision, my cell phone rang quite a bit. It was members of our regional Main Street calling. Small business owners were panicking. These folks built business plans for the expected final investment decisions for Ventura Global's CP2, Commonwealth LNG, Magnolia LNG and Lake Charles LNG -- representing \$28.5 billion in proposed projects," testified Cormier. "LNG companies have supported local schools and McNeese State University and SOWELA Technical Community College. This community partnership is helping our region grow its footprint in LNG and energy academic circles."

Cormier has also represented the concerns from Southwest Louisiana businesses on WWL in New Orleans and the Moon Griffon Show

Economic Development: Incubator/Entrepreneurial Training

Incubator Information

Suites in Incubator: ***29***
Engagement: ***50***
New Clients: ***3***

Program Participants: ***19***
2024 Graduates: ***2***

Outreach: McNeese State, SOWELA, High Schools, Biz Pitch, speaking engagements, marketing (traditional and social media), SEBD, five parish area.



THE WINNERS OF THE PITCH WERE:

FIRST PLACE: BENOIT JOHNSON WITH 3RD DAY FARMS (3RD FROM LEFT)
SECOND PLACE: CARL CORMAN WITH THIRD COAST CRAFT (FAR RIGHT)
THIRD PLACE: JESSICA BROUSSARD WITH PAINT & FIRE (2ND FROM LEFT)

Economic Development

The Peer Visit idea was postponed due to lack of volunteer engagement.



We are continuing our efforts to make Southwest Louisiana the Epicenter of The Clean Energy. We are affiliated with H2 The Future and HyVelocity Hub. We are also strong advocates for new Carbon Capture ventures and Southwest Louisiana hosting the infrastructure for solar and wind energy.

We have completed 22 BERG visits and fought behind the scenes to maintain incentives for regional companies.

Future Regional Opportunities

- The Port of Lake Charles and The Cameron Parish Port because of its ability to handle large vessels is a prime location for wind components manufacturing and installation vessels.
- Because of our regions geological formations SWLA is an attractive location for investment in CCS projects and job creation in clean energy technologies
- Our workforce is up to the challenge many of the skills required in the clean energy addition is used in the oil & gas industry.
- Push for Fort Johnson to utilize Port of Lake Charles.
- We are participating in the Louisiana Competes program to attract new business and grow existing businesses.



Chamber & Foundation Committees

Involvement is the key to maximizing the future opportunities of the Chamber SWLA and the SWLA Alliance Foundation. The skills, talents and experience of our members are vital to the future of Southwest Louisiana and utilized through our volunteer committee/council structure which has been designed to promote and fulfill our organizations' missions.

Economic Development

Business Development & Inclusion Task Force (Foundation Committee)

Chair: Velika Hurst-Trahan Staff Liaison: Eric Cormier

Harnesses the professional economic development talent across the region, promotes the sharing of information, the development of common regional goals and activities which support the development of a globally competitive economy in Southwest Louisiana.

General Members: Glynn Botley, Gary Gobert, Megan Hartman, Dahlia Matheus, Tyler Sellers, and George Swift.

Environmental Affairs (Chamber Committee)

Chair: Susan Mouton Vice Chair: Wyvette Prior-Cousins Staff Liaison: Gus Fontenot

Explores environmental issues and opportunities for businesses of all sizes across Southwest Louisiana, developing and implementing programming that is educational and supportive of pro-business environmental policies.

General Members: Kimberly Albrecht, Srinivasan Ambatipati, Vanessa Anseman, Katie Armentor, Kay Barnett, Scott Barrios, Jennifer Beall, Kara Bonsall, Jeff Bordelon, Andre Boudreaux, Ryan Bourriaque, Austin Brown, Regan Brown, Lou Buatt, Doug Burguiere, Amanda Butler, Drew Cagnolatti, Michael Castille, Neil Clark, Amy Courtney, Austin Doucet, Ben Drouilhet, Tianna Dunaway, Markle Farber, Jay Fear, Jason French, Josh Fontenot, Terry Frelot, Jamie Gaines, Nicholas Groves, Chrissie Gubancsik, Timothy Hall, Ron Hayes, Elizabeth Hebert, Mike Hollier, Jeanne Hornsby, Greg Johnson, Jennifer Kilkhen, Sean Kinney, Paul Kitziger, Ralph Lewing, Jason Lionberger, David Minton, Robin Morales, Jennifer Mouton, Susan Mouton, Kim Montie, Lucio Nunez, Nick Pestello, Duane Piranio, Jessica Pousson, Wyvette Pryor-Cousin, David Richard, Randy Roach, Jim Rock, Ricky Simon, Claire Stevenson, Josh Trahan, Travis Treme, Tammy Tonn, Tammy Truax, Rusty Vincent, Emily Von Qualen, Tom Vrenick, Allen Wainwright, Bruce Wyman, and Ning Zhang.

Fusion Five (Chamber Collaboration)

Chair: Taylor Stanley Staff Liaison: Michelle McInnis

Fusion Five is Southwest Louisiana's Premier Young Professionals Group. Fusion Five provides professional development and networking opportunities to our regional young professionals. Fusion Five has a separate membership from the Chamber SWLA and its Committee acts as its Board.

Governmental Affairs (Infrastructure) (Chamber Committee)

Chair: Ronnie Petree

Monitors legislation and administrative policy at the federal, state, and local level, recommending Chamber action as necessary to the Board of Directors. May also engage in the development of policy positions for the consideration of the Board of Directors and the membership of the Chamber SWLA. Will provide the foundation of a grassroots advocacy network. This committee will also monitor and promote the development of infrastructure necessary to sustain and improve the health of the business climate in Southwest Louisiana including but not limited to highway, rail, aviation, port, water/sewer, and telecommunications.

General Members: Neil Abrahamson, Brian Abshire, Vanessa Anseman, Heath Allen, Missy Amidon, Ann Barilleaux, Donald Brinkman, Ginger Corley, Woody Daigle, Kyle Edmiston, Courtney Fenet, Jr., Julio Galan, Dustin Granger, Tristan Gruspier, Megan Hartman, Tobie Hodgkins, Heather Hohensee, Lynn Hohensee, Dallas Kingham, Paul Kitziger, Chuck Kleckley, Lena McArthur, Elizabeth McLaughlin, Amy Miller, Nelson Mire, Blaine Newby, Chuck O'Conner, Steven Perez, Nick Pestello, Kristian Poncho, Patricia Prudhomme, Jason Rashall, Jim Rock, Erika Sluss, Angie Theuissen, Greg Thibodeaux, Lee Turner, and Matthew Wallace.

Small Business (Chamber Committee)

Chair: Mason LeBlanc; Vice Chair: Blaine Newby

Develops and implements programming to encourage small business growth across the five parishes of Southwest Louisiana, focusing particularly on the needs of Chamber SWLA members.

Rosa Alfred, James Babin, Madison Crain, Walker Davis, Ben Drouilhet, Tristan Gruspier, Dorothy Iles, Paul Kitziger, Rachelle Pitre, Paula Ramsey, Haley Tarasiewicz, Austin Terrell, Vic Vicknair, and Mitchell Woods

Women's Business Network (Chamber Advisory Council)

Chair: Erica McCreedy Staff Liaison: Amanda White

Plans the quarterly Women's Business Network lunches and annual awards luncheon.

General Members: Kristy Armand, Nomica Guillory, Angela Guth, Jennifer Istre, Michelle McInnis, Morgan Turpin, and Jessica Saxby.

Workforce/Education

Workforce Development / Education (Chamber Committee)

Chair: Matt Koch Staff Liaison: Michelle McInnis

Promotes and enhances quality workforce development and educational opportunities across Southwest Louisiana.

General Members: Dr. Mitchell Adrian, Mark Arsenault, Tuwanna August, Olivia Barrow, Black Brignac, Celia Broussard, Shelby Broussard, Kevin Caldwell, Nicole Cheramie, Nypheteria Clophus, Rebecca Coward, Woody Daigle, Charles Dalglish, Ana Denison, Christina Detiveaux, Jill Galamarini, Lisa Guerrero, Jason Guillory, Tristan Hager, Larry Hollie, Deidre King, Christi Kingsley, David LaFargue, Cameron Landry, Laurie Martin, Dalia Matheus, Tony McCardle, Nicole Miller, Kristin Ned, Angel Ogea, Michael Pritchard, Angela Queenan, Kent Reed, Kim Rider, Olivia Roberts, Jan Robicheaux, Jim Rock, Sarita Scheufens, Nic Sheppard, Katherine Shirley, Danielle Simien, Terri Simpson, Ayshe Tayfun, Brian Teegardin, Julie Theriot, Lee Turner, Morgan Turpin, Kay Vanchiere, Perry Vincent, Shay Watkins, and Baeleigh Witherwax.

Leadership/Southwest (Foundation Committee)

Chair: Terra Jones Staff Liaison: Michelle McInnis

Develops and directs the curriculum of Leadership/SWLA, a comprehensive nine-month program for middle managers and other professionals nominated by their companies and selected by the committee.

Past Chair Allyson Montgomery, Vice Chair Haley Tarasiewicz, Membership Chair Chad Miller, Alumni Chair Taylor Beard Stanley, Scholarship Chair Derek Porche, Policies Chair Catherine Fastabend, Members at Large: Heather Hidalgo, Clair Marceaux, , Steven Perez, and Anthony Celestine

Golf Tournament (Chamber Committee) Staff Liaison: Michelle McInnis

Coordinates all aspects of the annual golf tournament.

General Members: Melissa Griffin, Heather LeJeune, Erica McCreedy, Anne Miller, Julie Miller, Amy Dickman Gardner, Kylee Olinger, Sarah Profitt, Paula Ramsey, Tonya Richard, Maddie Savoy, Amanda White, Baeleigh Witherwax, and Mitchell Woods.

Nominating (Chamber Committee) Selected by the Board Chair

Nominates candidates for open positions on the Board of Directors and officers of the Chamber and Foundation. The nominating committee also tracks attendance and evaluates the performance of volunteers within the committee structure.

Quality of Life Task Forces (Alliance Foundation)

Vice Chair of the Board: Jill Galmarini Staff Liaison: Amanda White

General Members: Janice Ackley, Charla Blake, Celia Broussard, Tami Crisope, Christina Detiveaux, Jessica Duhon, Gus Fontenot, Terra Jones, Erica Martin, Jennifer Spees, Thom Trahan, Velika Hurst-Trahan, Morgan Turpin, and Matt Welsh.

2025 Leadership Southwest Class

The SWLA Alliance recently welcomed this year's Leadership Southwest participants at their mixer in early January. We are proud to welcome the participants of the Class of 2025:

- Allison Barker, Family & Youth Counseling Agency
- Mallie Bowers, First Federal Bank of Louisiana
- Taylor Bradley, AOP
- Kimmie Carriaga, First Horizon
- Chelsea Champagne, Stockwell Sievert Law Firm
- Christina Davis, Southwest Louisiana Credit Union
- Jalin DuRousseau, HD Truck & Tractor, LLC
- Jeannette Fontenot, Hancock Whitney
- Amy Gardner, CSE/Rotary Club of Lake Charles
- Elizabeth Hebert, Sam Hebert Financial Group
- Kimberlie Heckard, United Way Southwest LA
- Ryan Hess, CSE Federal Credit Union
- Dalton Hinton, Lamar Advertising
- Kaitlyn LaBove, Fusion Five
- Megan Lavergne, Champeaux Evans Hotard
- Charity Lewing, AMERISAFE
- Raimee Marque, Cameron LNG
- Kash McMahon, Turner Industries Group
- Alicia Mhire, First Federal Bank of LA
- Sam Moore, Visit Lake Charles
- Delaney Nugent, Lake Charles Memorial Health System
- Lauren Olsen, Sasol/Junior League of Lake Charles
- Kalyn Partin, GIS Engineering
- Nina Sona, HASC Louisiana
- Kelsey Talbot, CITGO
- Joshua Tannehill, Global Data Systems
- Diana Taylor, South Beau Hardware & Supply
- Caymn Turton, Lake Area Adventures
- Bubba Viator, The Boot
- Miranda Vinson, First Baptist Christian Academy
- Markell Williams, LCAC Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc.



The Leadership Southwest program will begin with an overnight opening retreat and continues through the year with full-day monthly experience-based training sessions conducted by recognized leaders whose decisions affect the region in areas such as economic development, business, workforce development, human services, education, government, coastal restoration, and infrastructure. The class will travel throughout the region to see hands-on how each parish contributes to our local economy.

They will also visit Baton Rouge for a glimpse into how our state and local government works together for our region. After completing the sessions, which end in November, the class will graduate and join over 900 Leadership Southwest Alumni to help guide our region into the future.

For more information on Leadership/Southwest Louisiana, contact Michelle McInnis at (337) 433-3632 or at mmcinnis@allianceswla.org.



WE GET **BUSINESS** DONE

in Southwest Louisiana

Southwest Louisiana boasts a thriving and diverse economy with numerous opportunities across various sectors such as energy, manufacturing, healthcare, and tourism.

The area benefits from robust gulf coast transportation and logistics networks—including the Port of Lake Charles and Chennault International Airport which touts a 10,000+ foot runway—facilitating easy access to domestic and international markets.



SWLA is home to a skilled and educated workforce, supported by excellent educational institutions and vocational training programs such as SOWELA Technical Community College and McNeese State University.

The region offers a business-friendly environment, characterized by low taxes, favorable regulations, and a supportive network of organizations and government entities that provide resources, guidance, and incentives to entrepreneurs.

The natural beauty, rich culture, and recreational offerings make it an attractive destination, providing access to a vibrant customer base.



www.ChooseSWLouisiana.com