

MEETING MINUTES FOR THE  
LOUISIANA MILITARY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
IN ACCORDANCE WITH REVISED STATUTE 4217.1  
ON THE 13TH DAY OF JULY, 2022  
COMMENCING AT 10:24 A.M.

LOUISIANA MILITARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

REPORTED BY: KRISTI RYLAND  
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER

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## PROCEEDINGS

BY MR. ABBOUD:

All right. Good morning,  
everyone. I'd first like to  
thank you for joining us this  
morning for today's LMAC  
meeting, 13 July. My name is  
Robby Abboud, Executive  
Director of the Louisiana  
Military Advisory Council.

I'm showing a little bit  
of a late start here, about 25  
after, so we'll go ahead and  
begin. We'll follow closely  
along with the agenda.  
Everyone should have a packet.  
If not, please let me know.  
But in that packet, there  
should be an agenda. We'll go  
ahead and follow that very  
closely today. So I'd like the  
record to reflect calling this  
meeting officially to order.

I know we have a number of  
important topics to get to, but

1 before we do that, following  
2 the agenda, I'd like to ask  
3 everyone to please stand for  
4 the Pledge of Allegiance.

5 (PARTICIPANTS RECITED PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE)

6 MR. ABOUD:

7 Thank you, very much. You  
8 may be seated. So before we  
9 kick off with the rest of the  
10 agenda, I'd like to do a quick  
11 roll call for the record. So  
12 as always, if there are any  
13 mispronunciations, please feel  
14 free to correct me. So we'll  
15 go ahead and begin with the  
16 roll call.

17 Mayor Clarence Beebe?

18 BY MR. BEEBE:

19 Here.

20 BY MR. ABOUD:

21 Representative Raymond  
22 Crews?

23 (NO ORAL RESPONSE)

24 BY MR. ABOUD:

25 General Robert Elder?

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(NO ORAL RESPONSE)

BY MR. ABBOUD:

MR. Robert Gatti?

BY MR. GATTI:

Here.

BY MR. ABBOUD:

Mr. Brian Jakes?

BY MR. JAKES:

Here.

BY MR. ABBOUD:

Mr. John Manion?

(NO ORAL RESPONSE)

BY MR. ABBOUD:

Secretary Don Pierson?

BY MR. PIERSON:

Present.

BY MR. ABBOUD:

Ms. Deborah Randolph?

BY MS. RANDOLPH:

Present.

BY MR. ABBOUD:

Mayor Rick Allen?

BY MR. ALLEN:

Present.

BY MR. ABBOUD:

1 Major General Ronald

2 Richard?

3 BY MR. RICHARD:

4 Here.

5 BY MR. ABBOUD:

6 Mr. Gary Silbert?

7 (NO ORAL RESPONSE)

8 BY MR. ABBOUD:

9 Mr. Ronnie Slone?

10 (NO ORAL RESPONSE)

11 BY MR. ABBOUD:

12 Senator Mike Reese?

13 BY MR. REESE:

14 Here.

15 BY MR. ABBOUD:

16 Secretary Joey Strickland?

17 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

18 Larry Williams standing in  
19 for the Secretary.

20 BY MR. ABBOUD:

21 Okay. For the record, Mr.

22 Larry Williams will be

23 reporting on behalf of

24 Secretary Joey Strickland.

25 Mr. Murray Viser?

1 BY MR. VISER:

2 Here.

3 BY MR. ABBOUD:

4 Major General Keith

5 Waddell?

6 BY MR. HOPKINS:

7 Major General Lee Hopkins

8 substituting for him today.

9 BY MR. ABBOUD:

10 Okay. Major General Lee

11 Hopkins will report on behalf

12 of Mayor General Keith Waddell.

13 Rear Admiral Joel

14 Whitehead?

15 BY MR. WHITEHEAD:

16 Here.

17 BY MR. ABBOUD:

18 Okay. So I see -- so by

19 my count, I show ten LMAC Board

20 Members in attendance which

21 means we do have a quorum if

22 needed.

23 So next we move onto the

24 approval of the previous

25 meetings and minutes. Those

1 should have been distributed  
2 prior to today's meeting. Does  
3 anyone have any questions,  
4 comments, or notes relative to  
5 the prior meetings minutes  
6 which was conducted in December  
7 of 2021?

8 (NO ORAL RESPONSE)

9 BY MR ABBOUD:

10 Okay. I am hearing none,  
11 so I'll now entertain a motion  
12 to adopt those minutes.

13 BY MR. JAKES:

14 Brian Jakes, so moved.

15 BY MR ABBOUD:

16 Do I have a second?

17 BY MR. ALLEN:

18 Second.

19 BY MR. ABBOUD:

20 Thank you. All in favor  
21 of adoption, please say aye.

22 (CHORUS OF AYES)

23 BY MR. ABBOUD:

24 Okay. Thank you. Okay.  
25 And so with that, I'd like to

1                   turn the meeting over to LED  
2                   Secretary Don Pierson, LMAC  
3                   Chairman for a few remarks.  
4                   Mr. Secretary?

5                   BY MR. PIERSON:

6                                 Thank you. I'll be brief,  
7                   but it's not because not a  
8                   whole lot has been happening.  
9                   We've had an excellent turn of  
10                  events over the last few  
11                  months. You're going to be  
12                  briefed on a lot of the things  
13                  that are moving forward in a  
14                  very favorable way, here  
15                  shortly.

16                                I do want to point out my  
17                  most recent upgrade to the  
18                  Louisiana Economic Development,  
19                  as we welcome Griffin Landry,  
20                  who will be my special projects  
21                  officer and confidential  
22                  assistant. You may recall  
23                  David Carter, he has been moved  
24                  onto a new professional  
25                  development opportunity in the



1 private sector. So I welcome  
2 Griffin and look forward to  
3 working around the state and  
4 the nation with him.

5 Joey Strickland is not  
6 available with us today, but  
7 we've had a number of good  
8 conversations, and you'll hear  
9 later some more of the  
10 initiatives that we continue to  
11 advance together. Some really  
12 outstanding legislative  
13 activities have occurred in  
14 Washington. Chris Goode will  
15 brief on that. He had intended  
16 to be here with us today, but  
17 as you'll hear later on the  
18 dial in, COVID has kept him in  
19 Washington D.C. today.

20 So a lot of outstanding  
21 activities to report on today.  
22 Thank you for carving out time  
23 to be here with us. This is  
24 just such an important  
25 endeavor. And again, while we

1 don't often get a chance to  
2 meet and bring you up to speed  
3 on things, feel free to contact  
4 myself or Robby at any time.  
5 But there has been a great deal  
6 of forward momentum that I'm  
7 pleased that you'll get the  
8 opportunity to learn more about  
9 today.

10 So with that, I will  
11 conclude my remarks and we can  
12 continue to transition through  
13 the agenda.

14 BY MR. ABBOUD:

15 Thank you very much, Mr.  
16 Secretary. So next, we can go  
17 ahead and move into our reports  
18 and presentations.

19 First, I'd like to call on  
20 behalf of the Department of  
21 Veterans Affairs, Mr. Larry  
22 Williams. He will be reporting  
23 out on behalf of Secretary  
24 Strickland.

25 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

1                   Thank you, and good  
2                   morning, everyone. Again, my  
3                   name is Larry Williams, and I'm  
4                   my Veterans Outreach Program  
5                   Director for the Louisiana  
6                   Department of Veterans Affairs.  
7                   I've been in this position for  
8                   about two years now. A lot of  
9                   you I know already, previously,  
10                  and a lot of you it's good to  
11                  see again as well.

12                  I do send greetings from  
13                  Secretary Strickland. My  
14                  briefing will be very basic.  
15                  It will give you a lot of great  
16                  information. I can answer some  
17                  questions, and questions that I  
18                  can't answer, I will be happy  
19                  to relay over to the Secretary.

20                  So I will begin with the  
21                  veterans' homes. Currently, we  
22                  are caring for 535 veterans at  
23                  five homes across the State of  
24                  Louisiana. We do have a small  
25                  number of veterans and

1 employees with COVID-19, but we  
2 are doing well. We are working  
3 to combat nursing and staff  
4 shortages through job fairs,  
5 advertising on social media,  
6 and partnerships with the State  
7 Civil Service, Louisiana  
8 Workforce Commission, and our  
9 local schools, to fill those  
10 nursing slots and staff  
11 shortages that we do show at  
12 some of our homes. Of course,  
13 we are competing with private  
14 nursing homes and other  
15 organizations for the same  
16 talent as well.

17 Moving on to our veteran  
18 cemeteries, I will go cemetery  
19 by cemetery with the current  
20 numbers. Central Louisiana  
21 Veterans Cemetery, which is  
22 located in Leesville, currently  
23 1,234 have been interred, and  
24 they average 12 burials a  
25 month. Northeast Louisiana

1 Veterans Cemetery, which is  
2 Rayville, 805 have been  
3 interred, and they average 12  
4 burials a month. The Northwest  
5 Louisiana Veterans Cemetery in  
6 Keithville, 3,722 have been  
7 interred, and they average 30  
8 burials a month. Southeast  
9 Louisiana Veterans Cemetery,  
10 which is in Slidell, 3,535 have  
11 been interred, and they average  
12 49 burials a month. And the  
13 Southwest Louisiana Veterans  
14 Cemetery out in Jennings,  
15 Louisiana, 266 have been  
16 interred, and they average 12  
17 burials a month. Of course,  
18 Jennings is our newest  
19 cemetery. That is a total of  
20 9,562 that have been interred  
21 across five state cemeteries or  
22 veteran state cemeteries across  
23 Louisiana, averaging 110  
24 burials a month.

25 We are currently working

1 with Trevor with VA on  
2 construction projects to expand  
3 ground burial spaces, and  
4 columbarium niches. These  
5 projects are at Keithville, 4.4  
6 million dollar project, and  
7 also at the Leesville Cemetery,  
8 which is a 2 million dollar  
9 project, and both of those  
10 expansion projects are  
11 currently underway as we speak.

12 The Keithville project has  
13 an anticipated completion date  
14 of Spring 2023, and the  
15 Leesville project is going into  
16 construction phase as of this  
17 moment. We are expecting  
18 October approval for the  
19 expansion and improvement  
20 projects at Rayville and the  
21 Slidell cemeteries.

22 Moving on to the Outreach  
23 Department, which of course is  
24 my home. Working on prevention  
25 of veteran homelessness,

1 suicide, women veterans  
2 outreach, and also helping  
3 veterans find employment. If  
4 you come across a veteran who  
5 needs assistance, you can  
6 always reach out to me, I'll be  
7 glad to give you my business  
8 cards. But those are my main  
9 focuses. Again, that's Veteran  
10 Homelessness Prevention, Women  
11 Veterans Outreach, Blue-Star  
12 Mothers Support, Gold-Star  
13 Mothers and Families Support,  
14 and also Veteran Employment.  
15 But I do work closely with the  
16 LED to bring the message of the  
17 programs that they offer to  
18 veteran business owners as  
19 well.

20 The one thing that I  
21 noticed is that a lot of times  
22 veteran business owners, and I  
23 can completely understand,  
24 don't have a whole lot of time  
25 to get on the LED website and

1 kind of comb through and look  
2 at the overview. So to me,  
3 it's easier if I work with the  
4 LED to bring those programs to  
5 the veteran business owners as  
6 I travel the State of  
7 Louisiana.

8 But again, if you are  
9 looking for support for a  
10 veteran, you can always reach  
11 out to me, and I will do my  
12 very best to assist them.

13 We have built a book of  
14 non-traditional resources  
15 offered by non-profit and  
16 community organizations that  
17 can help veterans in ways the  
18 state and federal VA  
19 Departments can't, and this  
20 also includes housing options  
21 and employment options as well.

22 Of course, we maintain  
23 relationships with veteran  
24 service organizations for their  
25 support, and this includes the



1 American Legion, VVA, VFW, and  
2 our other VSO organizational  
3 friends.

4 We will be holding our  
5 Fifth Annual Suicide Prevention  
6 Summit on September 9th. And  
7 that will be located in Baton  
8 Rouge at 9:00 a.m. Our annual  
9 Gold-Star Mothers and Families  
10 recognition ceremony will be  
11 held on Friday, September 23rd,  
12 and that will be in Baton Rouge  
13 beside the State Capitol at the  
14 Veterans Memorial Park, and  
15 that event will start at 9:00  
16 a.m. as well.

17 The LaVetCorps program,  
18 our LaVetCorps Navigators are  
19 veterans that we hired, and we  
20 put them on college campuses  
21 around the State of Louisiana  
22 with the purpose of assisting  
23 veteran military dependent  
24 students navigate their way  
25 through college. As we know,

1 veterans can face very unique  
2 challenges when trying to  
3 navigate their way through a  
4 four year degree. Especially  
5 those who may suffer from PTSD  
6 or other illnesses that may  
7 affect their mental state. But  
8 also, it can be very tough if  
9 you have a 32 year old veteran  
10 who decides I want to go back  
11 to college, just navigating  
12 their way through college can  
13 be an experience in itself.

14 So our navigators operate  
15 on 32 college and university  
16 campus veteran centers  
17 throughout the State of  
18 Louisiana. The program serves  
19 more than 10,000 student  
20 veterans and their families,  
21 and it reminds me of my days  
22 when I retired from the  
23 military in 2019, the first job  
24 I had was to be a LaVetCorps  
25 Navigator out on the LSU campus

1 in Baton Rouge.

2 Our State Approving Agency

3 -- our State Approving Agency

4 approves all GI Bill payments

5 for college campuses and

6 student veterans. Most

7 recently, we brought in more

8 than 168 million dollars in

9 federal dollars to Louisiana's

10 Higher Education communities

11 through 232 programs. So if

12 you do have a school, and it's

13 not just 2 year or 4 year

14 universities, but a barber

15 school, a cosmetology school,

16 whatever the case may be, that

17 is in your district or in your

18 parish, and they are interested

19 in how to become GI Bill

20 approved, you can reach out to

21 us and we'll put you in contact

22 with the State Approving Agency

23 to get them through the process

24 of becoming approved to be able

25 to receive a Montgomery GI Bill

1 from veterans and also our  
2 national guard and reserve  
3 soldiers.

4 The Military Family  
5 Assistance Fund -- and I'll  
6 back up real quick, are tuition  
7 assistance dollars just  
8 depending which branch of  
9 service you serve in.

10 Military Family Assistance  
11 Fund, the Military Family  
12 Assistance Fund is a fund that  
13 was set up to assist veterans  
14 who are in financial need. The  
15 Board reviews applications and  
16 can award up to \$10,000 per  
17 year to a veteran. Last fiscal  
18 year, the Military Family  
19 Assistance Fund awarded just  
20 over \$71,000 in need based  
21 claims to Louisiana veterans.  
22 So if you do have a veteran  
23 that is in financial need, you  
24 can always reach out to us to  
25 see if they qualify for the

1 Military Family Assistance  
2 Fund. And if they do, we will  
3 be glad to help them out. The  
4 \$10,000, they do not have to  
5 pay it back.

6 And I will conclude with  
7 our Benefit's Offices, our  
8 Veterans Assistance Counselors,  
9 we have at least one in each  
10 parish. Some of our more  
11 busier parishes, like East  
12 Baton Rouge, are assigned two  
13 Veterans Assistance Counselors.  
14 But our Veterans Assistance  
15 Counselors, or our VACs, staff  
16 our veterans' benefits offices,  
17 assisting veterans and their  
18 families with the benefits they  
19 have earned. According to the  
20 Federal VA, our VACs help bring  
21 in more than 1.5 billion  
22 statewide in compensation and  
23 pension dollars. These dollars  
24 go directly to the areas 10,000  
25 veterans and their families.

1                   The one thing that I'll  
2                   conclude with is if you have a  
3                   veteran, again, in your parish,  
4                   region, or area who has not  
5                   filed a disability claim but is  
6                   interested in filing a  
7                   disability claim, to please  
8                   have them reach out to the  
9                   Louisiana Department of  
10                  Veterans Affairs. A lot of  
11                  times we hear that it's not  
12                  worth it, or I don't want to  
13                  take somebody else's money,  
14                  whatever the case may be, but  
15                  it is always worth it if a  
16                  veteran feels that they  
17                  incurred an injury while they  
18                  served in the military that  
19                  affects them now, they should  
20                  see a Veterans Assistance  
21                  Counselor to see about filing a  
22                  disability claim because this  
23                  is a benefit that they have  
24                  earned.

25                                   And now, I'm not sure if

1 I'm -- Mr. Abboud, am I taking  
2 questions or are we just  
3 briefing?

4 BY MR. ABBOUD:

5 We can take questions at  
6 this time.

7 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

8 Okay. If anybody has any  
9 questions, let me know, feel  
10 free?

11 (NO ORAL RESPONSE)

12 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

13 No? I want to thank you  
14 all for what you do. I truly  
15 appreciate it, and I look  
16 forward to meeting with you  
17 again after this meeting is  
18 over.

19 Mr. Abboud, thank you.

20 Thank you all.

21 BY MR. ABBOUD:

22 Thank you very much, Mr.  
23 Williams. I know we certainly  
24 appreciate the opportunity to  
25 partner and work with the

1 Louisiana Department of  
2 Veterans Affairs on behalf of  
3 our veteran owned small  
4 businesses throughout the  
5 state.

6 So I'm not hearing any  
7 questions. If anyone does have  
8 any questions, we can certainly  
9 allow for time following all of  
10 the presentations.

11 That said, I would like to  
12 now call on Major General Lee  
13 Hopkins to report on behalf of  
14 General Waddell.

15 BY MR. HOPKINS:

16 Thank you. All right.  
17 Good morning, everyone. Good  
18 to see everyone here. Thank  
19 you for the opportunity,  
20 Secretary Pierson, Mr. Robby.  
21 On behalf of General Waddell,  
22 we appreciate the chance to  
23 come here and give you a quick  
24 update on some of the things  
25 that have gone on since



1 December, in the Louisiana  
2 National Guard.

3 And I'll tell you today,  
4 the Louisiana National Guard  
5 remains operationally engaged  
6 in our federal mission in  
7 support of the war fight, and  
8 also our state mission in  
9 support of the citizens of  
10 Louisiana.

11 Currently, for our federal  
12 mission, we have 178 soldiers  
13 and airmen, who are mobilized  
14 either overseas or in the U.S.,  
15 that are supporting contingency  
16 operations. And of note, you  
17 know, just a few weeks ago on  
18 30 June, we were able to  
19 welcome back 282 airmen of our  
20 159th Fighter Wing who were  
21 deployed in the homeland for  
22 Operation Noble Eagle, which as  
23 you know, provides security and  
24 homeland defense for our United  
25 States.

1                   We currently have another  
2                   800 soldiers and airmen that  
3                   are in the training process  
4                   right now, and they're  
5                   projected to mobilize in the  
6                   upcoming year for contingency  
7                   operations.

8                   On the home front, I'll  
9                   talk a little bit about  
10                  emergency response. Since  
11                  December, I know when General  
12                  Waddell was here in December,  
13                  he talked about Ida in detail.  
14                  A lot of things went on. The  
15                  good thing, it has been a  
16                  little quieter since Hurricane  
17                  Ida but, you know, we're  
18                  prepped and ready for the next  
19                  one to come.

20                  But since December, really  
21                  the bigger response we had,  
22                  other than COVID, was in March  
23                  of this year, we did mobilize  
24                  about 260 soldiers and airmen  
25                  for their tornadoes that struck

1 in St. Bernard Parish and  
2 caused damage there. And they  
3 assisted with the tornado  
4 recovery operations there in  
5 St. Bernard Parish. Our  
6 engineers cleared down trees,  
7 we removed debris from  
8 municipal facilities and  
9 buildings, and then we also  
10 delivered tarps for the  
11 numerous homes that had been  
12 impacted by that tornado to  
13 assist those citizens.

14 Back to COVID. A  
15 significant milestone on 30  
16 June after more than two years  
17 and continuous operations, we  
18 ended our COVID task force.  
19 You know that we had at one  
20 time up to about 900 soldiers  
21 and airmen who were on duty  
22 doing great things for  
23 Louisiana, partnering with the  
24 Louisiana Department of Health,  
25 and also, you know, other state

1 agencies and our parishes. In  
2 total they did a lot of work  
3 over that time frame. They  
4 administered over 636,000 COVID  
5 tests during that time period.  
6 They gave vaccines to more than  
7 234,800 citizens in Louisiana.  
8 They completed over 140,000  
9 emergency delivery missions of  
10 various things; PPE, vaccines,  
11 supplies, whatever was  
12 necessary to support COVID --  
13 the fight against COVID.

14 And in support of numerous  
15 food banks around the state,  
16 they packaged and were able to  
17 distribute 46.5 million pounds  
18 of food to those citizens who  
19 were impacted due to, you know,  
20 losing jobs and not being able  
21 to work because of whatever  
22 reason due to COVID. So really  
23 a lot of work that went on.

24 And last but not least, on  
25 the home front is cyber. It's

1 probably the one fight that we  
2 currently in pretty much every  
3 day at this point. Our Joint  
4 Cyber Teams in conjunction with  
5 GOHSEP, Louisiana State Police,  
6 and the Office of Technology  
7 Services, continue to respond  
8 to cyber incidents within the  
9 state. You know, so every few  
10 weeks, we're assisting some  
11 type of attack to try and  
12 remedy their situation and  
13 bring them back online to  
14 function. We are working  
15 closely at this point with OTS  
16 and Louisiana State Police and  
17 GOHSEP on developing a state  
18 run cyber program that will --  
19 what we kind of call Getting  
20 Left of Boom, you know, before  
21 the impact and helping them,  
22 helping, you know, state  
23 agencies and, you know, and  
24 private companies as need be,  
25 try to help themselves prevent

1 an attack and reduce an attack  
2 if it goes.

3 So we're currently in the  
4 process of that, and we'll have  
5 some additional personnel that  
6 we'll be bringing on as a state  
7 agency for the Louisiana  
8 Military Department in  
9 conjunction with OTS and GOHSEP  
10 that will be able to help that  
11 cyber resiliency throughout our  
12 state.

13 Moving onto another big  
14 topic that currently is going  
15 on, Louisiana Guard Military  
16 Construction. I know you guys  
17 see that around the state. We  
18 continue to work on improving  
19 our facilities. Of course, you  
20 know in the beginning of June,  
21 we were out at Chennault  
22 Airport in Lake Charles. Broke  
23 ground for our Third Battalion  
24 Headquarters, the Third  
25 Infantry Battalion Headquarters

1           there at the airport. That's  
2           a, you know, a 60,000 square  
3           foot, 31.2 million dollar  
4           facility. It's going to be  
5           just a grand facility there. I  
6           know the contractors are  
7           currently in process of  
8           mobilizing and getting set,  
9           getting the steel in, and  
10          getting the things so they can  
11          begin construction, hopefully,  
12          in the next 30 to 45 days, and  
13          actually, you know, start  
14          seeing things go up there.

15                 Our 159th Fighter Wing  
16          that is out of NAS Joint  
17          Reserve Base New Orleans is  
18          about 75 percent complete on  
19          their new Alert Complex and the  
20          Apron that's going to support  
21          their operations there. As you  
22          know, at that facility they  
23          maintain, you know, alert  
24          aircraft on station 24 hours a  
25          day, 7 days a week in support

1 of the Noble Eagle mission  
2 right there at NAS JRB.

3 We're also about 35  
4 percent along on a construction  
5 of a new Readiness Center at  
6 Camp Beauregard, you know,  
7 right next to us at Pineville.  
8 As you know, back in 2018  
9 during the Halloween tornado,  
10 Camp Beauregard was probably  
11 the most impacted in the state.  
12 We had about 30 buildings that  
13 were somewhat damaged with 12  
14 of those buildings being  
15 significant damage. One was  
16 almost a total loss, which was  
17 an armory for our Military  
18 Police Company there. So we're  
19 about 35 percent complete on  
20 construction of that facility.  
21 So hopefully, that will come  
22 online and provide a much  
23 better place for us to train,  
24 not only for our federal  
25 mission but also to serve as a



1 jump off point for our state  
2 mission.

3 Additionally, what we're  
4 working on design now, we're  
5 set to receive 13.8 million  
6 dollars to construct a  
7 Collective Training and  
8 Unaccompanied Housing Facility  
9 at our Camp Minden site. We're  
10 currently at about 30 percent  
11 design on that right now. So  
12 hopefully, in the next 45 to 60  
13 days we're going to see that  
14 design get to the complete  
15 stage. We can put that project  
16 out for bid, and that will be  
17 another location that will  
18 support our training, but also  
19 support us in the event that  
20 we've got to respond to in-  
21 state emergencies.

22 Of future construction's  
23 efforts that we're looking at  
24 is on the major construction  
25 line. We're trying, you know,

1                    hopefully, in the next out  
2                    years, in 2025 our goal is to,  
3                    hopefully, see a new armory for  
4                    our 256 Infantry Brigade Combat  
5                    Team in the Lafayette area.  
6                    That's currently projected on  
7                    the FYDP for 2025. And then  
8                    for 2027 we are currently  
9                    programed for a new armory that  
10                   will support our Abbeville unit  
11                   which is the second -- the 156  
12                   Infantry battalion.

13                   Moving to our education  
14                   programs, our non-military part  
15                   of our organization, we  
16                   continue to do great things  
17                   with our education programs.  
18                   You know, with the COVID hit, I  
19                   know that General Waddell  
20                   briefed that, you know, that we  
21                   had to reduce capacity to meet  
22                   the COVID guidelines. We're  
23                   currently at our programs and  
24                   moved all the way up to 70  
25                   percent at each of our

1 programs, and this July with  
2 our class that just started off  
3 at Camp Beauregard, we went  
4 back to 100 percent for our  
5 goal, and got all of our cadets  
6 back online to get the full  
7 capacity. So we're excited  
8 about that because we're able  
9 to, you know, serve more of the  
10 community and do great things  
11 for our at risk youths.

12 We continue with our Star-  
13 Based Programs, and are  
14 currently on their summer  
15 programs right now, which is a  
16 reduced load because schools  
17 are out. But as the schools  
18 come back in at the end of  
19 August, they'll begin engaging  
20 with those schools and  
21 providing the week long STEM  
22 emersion for fifth graders,  
23 that would help that.

24 And our Job Challenge  
25 Program continues to progress

1 in providing those job  
2 certification skills as our YCP  
3 graduates feed into our job  
4 challenge program, and they  
5 earn those certificates such  
6 as, you know, automotive, you  
7 know, nurses aid, culinary  
8 skills, welding, and  
9 certifications that they can go  
10 out and get, you know, good  
11 paying jobs that can support  
12 their lives out of that  
13 program.

14 Our State Partnership  
15 Program, we continue to work  
16 with Belize and Haiti. So far  
17 with Belize in '22 we completed  
18 12 events with the Country of  
19 Belize and have an additional  
20 six scheduled for the rest of  
21 the remaining of this year.  
22 And we've completed two events  
23 with Haiti and have another two  
24 that are scheduled for this  
25 year. And of note, for our

1 cooperative relationship with  
2 the Belize Defense Force, we  
3 currently have five candidates  
4 from the Belize Defense Force.  
5 Soldiers who are currently  
6 going through the Officer  
7 Candidate School Program that  
8 we're involved in, in  
9 Louisiana, alongside of eight  
10 of our soldiers with the recent  
11 Louisiana Guard Soldiers who  
12 have gone through that program.  
13 So the Belize Defense Force is  
14 using, you know, our Officer  
15 Commissioning Program to  
16 produce their leaders for the  
17 future of their defense force.

18 And then, just to kind of  
19 close out with the Readiness,  
20 which is probably the most  
21 important thing we do is be  
22 ready for the next fight,  
23 whatever that means, we are  
24 ready for that next mission.  
25 The Louisiana National Guard as

1 a whole is over 106 percent in  
2 strength as a whole, and we  
3 look at those health gauges  
4 that are kept at the national  
5 level, and we're number two in  
6 the nation against, you know,  
7 the other 54 states and  
8 territories.

9 So your Louisiana National  
10 Guard is extremely strong, you  
11 know, in being ready for the  
12 next fight. Be it, you know,  
13 the away game, you know, for  
14 our contingency operations, or  
15 the home game against any  
16 emergency or threat to  
17 Louisiana. You know the  
18 operational tempo we have been  
19 under the last two years, and  
20 just as a note, our retention  
21 is really through the roof for  
22 Louisiana National Guard. It  
23 is, you know, we're at above 80  
24 percent retention in our Army  
25 and our Air National Guard,

1           which is really phenomenal. So  
2           even though we have been under  
3           that just relentless mobilized,  
4           go overseas, mobilized, respond  
5           to a state emergency, our  
6           soldiers and airmen are  
7           choosing to stay on the team  
8           with us. So we're proud and  
9           appreciative of their support  
10          because it allows us to  
11          continue to be strong and be  
12          ready for the next event,  
13          whatever that may be.

14                        So in closing, on behalf  
15          of General Waddell, I would  
16          like to, you know, a special  
17          thank you to our families and  
18          employers because they allow us  
19          to support. Without their  
20          support we could not come in  
21          every day to do the things we  
22          do. Also I would like to thank  
23          Governor Edwards, our  
24          legislature for their support,  
25          our state, federal and parish

1 local agencies that support us  
2 all throughout the way, and I  
3 appreciate their help in  
4 helping us serve the citizens  
5 of Louisiana.

6 And I'll thank you for  
7 your time today, and I'll be  
8 ready to open any questions you  
9 may have for the Louisiana  
10 National Guard.

11 Yes, sir?

12 BY MR. PIERSON:

13 Not a question, sir, but  
14 just thank you for hosting  
15 Governor Edwards, and I believe  
16 Robby was there as well with  
17 the training exercise involving  
18 the 82nd Airborne Division. It  
19 was a great day, and really an  
20 eye opener for us.

21 BY MR. HOPKINS:

22 Right. He got to play  
23 with his alma mater there. All  
24 right. Good deal.

25 Yes, sir?



1 BY MR. WHITEHEAD:

2 It was interesting in  
3 hearing the retention figures  
4 that you have. I'm curious  
5 since I've heard so much in the  
6 news about DOD's recruiting  
7 efforts, how are your  
8 recruiting efforts?

9 BY MR. HOPKINS:

10 Well, you know, our  
11 recruiting efforts are not as  
12 -- you know, they're not as  
13 high as they have been in the  
14 past. They are down a little  
15 bit. But, you know, but look  
16 at the health of the  
17 organization. We are, you  
18 know, ahead of, you know,  
19 percentage wise, out of most of  
20 our other states. So you know,  
21 we are doing well. Again,  
22 we're, you know, we would  
23 always like to be doing better  
24 in order to keep that youth  
25 through our system, but we're

1 at, like I say, we're at over  
2 106 percent strength. So you  
3 know, we've got that -- we've  
4 got that extra stuff right now  
5 that's helping us, you know,  
6 through troubled times. I know  
7 those things will come back,  
8 you know, because it's always a  
9 continuing in time with the,  
10 you know, ups and downs. So we  
11 can weather the storm.

12 Yes, sir, Mr. Larry?

13 BY MR. WILLIAMS:

14 What's the capacity going  
15 to be on the unaccompanied  
16 housing at Minden, sir?

17 BY MR. HOPKINS:

18 It will support a company  
19 sized unit in their training.  
20 It's going to have, you know,  
21 storage facilities, the ability  
22 to feed out of, and also house  
23 out of. So, you know,  
24 basically, a company sized  
25 unit. So you're looking at,

1                   you know, 140 to 150 personnel.

2           BY MR. WILLIAMS:

3                   Got you, sir. Thank you.

4           BY MR. HOPKINS:

5                   All right. Thank you for  
6                   your time. Appreciate you.

7           BY MR. ABOUD:

8                   Thank you very much, sir.  
9                   Next I'd like to call on Murray  
10                  Viser to report out on  
11                  Barksdale Forward, and I  
12                  believe there's a printout,  
13                  which I will hand out as Murray  
14                  begins.

15          BY MR. VISER:

16                  Thank you, Robby. Good  
17                  morning, everyone. Glad to be  
18                  back here meeting in person,  
19                  and having the opportunity to  
20                  see bright smiling faces. It's  
21                  always good.

22                  Since we last met, the 2nd  
23                  Bomb Wing Commander has changed  
24                  out. Colonel Scott Weyermuller  
25                  assumed command from Colonel

1 Mark Dmytryszyn on March 31st.  
2 Colonel Dmytryszyn has gone on  
3 to other things, and if you  
4 would like to know what his  
5 call sign is, it's Vanna. And  
6 if you look at his last name,  
7 he has no vowels in his last  
8 name. So he would like to buy  
9 a vowel if you have any for  
10 sale.

11 General Cotton, the  
12 Commander of Air Force Global  
13 Strike Command, has been  
14 nominated but not yet confirmed  
15 to become Commander of U.S.  
16 Strategic Command. His  
17 replacement has not been  
18 announced yet, so we don't know  
19 where we stand there.

20 The Weapons Generation  
21 Facility at Barksdale, or lack  
22 thereof, seems to be on track,  
23 as does the new gate into  
24 Barksdale. Both of those are  
25 going to be game changers for

1 the 2nd Bomb Wing and the B-52.

2 For those who don't know  
3 right now, the situation is  
4 such that if the balloon goes  
5 up, and the B-52's have to go  
6 fly off in anger somewhere,  
7 they have to go to Minot, North  
8 Dakota, to be able to load  
9 nuclear weapons. That's not a  
10 good plan for anybody. So that  
11 will -- the new Weapons  
12 Generation Facility will solve  
13 that problem.

14 The new gate that will be  
15 built on the northeast side of  
16 Barksdale, is going to be a  
17 game changer. And Senator  
18 Gatti can tell you that it's  
19 going to be a game changer for  
20 the people coming on and off  
21 the base at the peak hours  
22 during the mornings and the  
23 afternoons. It's going to be a  
24 big, big deal.

25 Barksdale has a little

1 over 251 million dollars in the  
2 next few years in military  
3 construction projects out  
4 there. Thanks to Congressman  
5 Mike Johnson and our  
6 delegation, both in D.C. and  
7 Baton Rouge, we have had a  
8 great deal of support. The  
9 Roosevelt Group, of course, has  
10 been extremely supportive, and  
11 we work very closely together  
12 to make sure that the things  
13 that Barksdale Air Force Base,  
14 and by extension, the rest of  
15 the military bases across the  
16 State of Louisiana, are taken  
17 care of.

18 In the last few months, my  
19 travel schedule has picked up  
20 again, and I had several trips  
21 to various military bases  
22 across the country. F.E.  
23 Warren in Cheyenne, Wyoming,  
24 which is one of three ICBM  
25 bases, I had an opportunity to

1 talk to the young people that  
2 maintain the missiles, are  
3 responsible for launching the  
4 missiles if necessary, and also  
5 do things like, if you've ever  
6 seen an ICBM, they're huge,  
7 moving them around on what's  
8 called a launcher erector. And  
9 it's pretty fascinating to  
10 watch what those young people  
11 do, and to think that most of  
12 them are, you know, in their  
13 mid twenties, maybe, maybe. It  
14 makes me feel old. But I am  
15 old, so I guess that's okay.  
16 Talking with those young  
17 people, if you have not had a  
18 chance to do that, it's really  
19 -- and General, I'll hope  
20 you'll agree with me, it  
21 restores your faith in the  
22 young folks in our next  
23 generation coming up, because  
24 they are serious as they can be  
25 about what they do. They're

1 excited, and they're scary,  
2 scary smart.

3 In April, I was in  
4 Brighton, Connecticut, for a  
5 strategic deterrent coalition  
6 symposium. The Strategic  
7 Deterrent Coalition is an  
8 organization that helps or  
9 tries to expand the  
10 understanding of why we have a  
11 strategic nuclear deterrent,  
12 and what actually that means.  
13 And I was honored during that  
14 trip to be elected president of  
15 that organization. So coming  
16 from the submarine capitol of  
17 the world, I guess that's a  
18 really good thing.

19 In June, I went out to  
20 Indo Pacific Command, and also  
21 Joint Base Elmendorf-  
22 Richardson, which is in Alaska.  
23 And those were eye opening  
24 trips. They really were. What  
25 the conditions that the folks



1 in Alaska work under are pretty  
2 brutal; not this time of the  
3 year, but in the winter. And  
4 yet they do exactly what  
5 they're supposed to do every  
6 day.

7 Indo Pacific Command, it  
8 is the largest unified  
9 combatant command in our  
10 inventory. And what does that  
11 mean. It's over a million  
12 square miles. I'm sorry, my  
13 brain doesn't work like that,  
14 so I'm not sure how much that  
15 is, except it's a lot.

16 So I'm honored to be here  
17 today, and thank you for  
18 allowing me to speak, and I'll  
19 try to answer any questions if  
20 have them.

21 Yes, sir?

22 BY MR. JAKES:

23 Brian Jakes.

24 BY MR. VISER:

25 Yes, sir?

1 BY MR. JAKES:

2 When we visited Bossier  
3 City at Barksdale, the Lead  
4 Commander brought to our  
5 attention the spouse licensure  
6 and its issue on why a lot of  
7 people don't want to come this  
8 base. Has that improved  
9 somewhat, or is this a question  
10 for Mike?

11 BY MR. VISER:

12 Yeah, I think, Mike, go  
13 ahead.

14 BY MR. REESE:

15 We've done some budgets --

16 BY MR. OWEN:

17 Sorry, I can answer that.  
18 I'm Representative Owen. Two  
19 years ago we passed a bill into  
20 law, which Governor Edwards  
21 signed. It was Act 210, that  
22 any military spouse that moves  
23 here, any military spouse with  
24 any credential, other than a  
25 law license, their credentials

1 are accepted. That has been in  
2 law for two years. Now, if  
3 there are any licensing boards  
4 in Louisiana that are not  
5 abiding by this, please get in  
6 touch with a legislator. And  
7 even if they're not my  
8 constituent, please get in  
9 touch with me, and I'll get on  
10 them like ants on a spilled  
11 snow cone.

12 BY MR. JAKES:

13 Okay. And I now this  
14 gentleman's wife I think the  
15 Colonel's wife was a nurse.  
16 And I think the nursing thing  
17 may have -- but I think there  
18 was some issues with teachers  
19 that --

20 BY MR. OWENS:

21 They are not -- these  
22 nursing -- these boards and  
23 these municipalities, or these  
24 folks are not supposed to be  
25 doing that.

1 BY MR. JAKES:

2 Okay.

3 BY MR. OWENS:

4 So please let me help.

5 BY MR. JAKES:

6 Okay. Thank you, sir.

7 BY MR. OWENS:

8 Yes, sir.

9 BY MR JAKES:

10 Great.

11 BY MR. VISER:

12 Thank you. Yeah, that's a  
13 critical issue, and it needs to  
14 be -- it is being addressed and  
15 that's good.

16 Yes, sir?

17 BY MR. GATTI:

18 Yeah, I'll add the  
19 Physical Therapy Board has  
20 started to fast track those  
21 because it was not, and I think  
22 the law was passed, but then we  
23 still had a stall at the Board,  
24 you know, just the normal  
25 verification of paperwork

1                   because they still want to  
2                   protect the profession.

3           BY MR. OWENS:

4                   Sure.

5           BY MR. GATTI:

6                   You know, make sure that  
7                   they're a comparable licensing  
8                   requirement. And I know  
9                   they're fast tracking it, and I  
10                  think that has evolved to a way  
11                  where it's not an issue  
12                  anymore.

13          BY MR. JAKES:

14                  Good.

15          BY MR. OWENS:

16                  The State Medical  
17                  Licensing Board has about 15 or  
18                  16 bends under it, and their  
19                  agreement with the State is  
20                  they will give someone a  
21                  license pend -- a permit  
22                  pending license now. And then  
23                  that gives them time to do the  
24                  background check or to do  
25                  whatever they need to do. So

1                   thank you.

2           BY MR. VISER:

3                   Excellent. Good news.

4                   Thank you.

5           BY MR. ABBOUD:

6                   Thank you very much,  
7                   Murray. Next, I'd like to call  
8                   on Mayor Rick Allen to report  
9                   out on behalf of the Louisiana  
10                  Armed Forces Alliance.

11          BY MR. ALLEN:

12                  Thank you, Robby. We just  
13                  had a change in command at Fort  
14                  Polk on Monday. New Brigadier  
15                  General David W. Gardner took  
16                  the realm, and he has been at  
17                  Fort Polk, and about five years  
18                  ago, and I already have a  
19                  relationship with him, so we  
20                  expect a seamless transition  
21                  with him. Also I'm very good  
22                  friends with Senator Reese and  
23                  mentioned him at the change of  
24                  command. So we're looking  
25                  forward to getting to work with

1           our new brigadier general at  
2           Polk.

3                       As you know, the name of  
4           Fort Polk will be changing come  
5           very soon, and so we deemed it  
6           a perfect opportunity to re-  
7           brand Fort Polk Progress and  
8           Fort Polk, so the new name of  
9           Fort Polk Progress is now  
10          Louisiana Armed Forces  
11          Alliance. And it is also a  
12          perfect opportunity for us to  
13          branch out, and instead of  
14          being totally focused upon Fort  
15          Polk and our immediate needs,  
16          we are looking at a more state-  
17          wide effort to protect military  
18          assets across our great state.

19                      As you know, Secretary Don  
20          Pierson and Robby were very  
21          instrumental in the economic  
22          impact study that showed that  
23          the military inserts about 6.94  
24          billion dollars into our  
25          state's economy. So it's very

1           important to our entire state,  
2           not just Barksdale Air Force  
3           Base, or not just Fort Polk, or  
4           not just Belle Chase, but to  
5           our entire state. So it was  
6           the perfect opportunity for us  
7           to branch out and try to be  
8           more helpful in other areas and  
9           get other communities involved.

10                        So thanks to the Roosevelt  
11           Group for keeping the IGSA  
12           fight in front of our Louisiana  
13           delegation and D.C. because it  
14           will continuously be under  
15           attack. And once any of those  
16           opportunities hit a PL list, a  
17           procurement list, and it  
18           literally takes an Act of  
19           Congress to get item back off  
20           of that PL. So it's very  
21           important that we stay in front  
22           of that fight with our IGSA's,  
23           and so we're thankful that the  
24           Roosevelt Group keeps that  
25           front and center.



1                   Our Louisiana Armed Forces  
2                   and Alliance are also  
3                   coordinating a visit to D.C. in  
4                   September with the Roosevelt  
5                   Group, and I will be taking my  
6                   entire city council up there,  
7                   because if you get them in  
8                   front of the right people and  
9                   they see exactly what we're  
10                  doing, then they understand why  
11                  we fight so hard for our  
12                  military here in Louisiana.

13                  I'm thankful for our  
14                  Louisiana delegation that  
15                  understands the investment and  
16                  the importance of that  
17                  investment in our great state.  
18                  A number of significant  
19                  investments pouring into Fort  
20                  Polk, and eight MILCON projects  
21                  over the next five years that  
22                  will be a game changer for Fort  
23                  Polk.

24                  And also, I'm very proud  
25                  of Murray and his work up at

1 Barksdale Air Force Base and  
2 all the projects that you got  
3 coming in up there, man. Great  
4 job, Murray. Thanks for all  
5 you do for our great state.

6 The OSD Army currently re-  
7 examining for structure in  
8 Europe and its continuous Army  
9 presence so we're kind of  
10 waiting to see if we can pick  
11 up anything at our local bases  
12 off of anything that's going on  
13 across the globe. The Army  
14 activates a V Corps with  
15 forward headquarters in Poland  
16 and established a multi-domain  
17 task force and theater fires  
18 command, and is the first of  
19 likely three of these commands.

20 And so I'm thankful to  
21 work on this team that we have  
22 that continually examines what  
23 is going on at D.C. and what  
24 our military is thinking and  
25 tries to get in front of those

1 and bring that money home to  
2 our state. There is no other  
3 state in the union that is more  
4 patriotic than Louisiana, I  
5 promise you that. I've been  
6 fortunate enough to travel  
7 around the state as I'm  
8 currently for LMA second vice,  
9 for some reason. And I've been  
10 fortunate enough to travel  
11 around our great state and talk  
12 to just about all 300 mayors in  
13 our state in the past month and  
14 tried to make sure they  
15 understand how important our  
16 military is to our great state.

17 As you heard, our Veterans  
18 Affairs Report, I was shocked  
19 at how many veterans are buried  
20 in our state monthly, and  
21 that's just in our veteran  
22 cemeteries. That doesn't count  
23 in private cemeteries and  
24 stuff. So the number of  
25 veterans that we have in our

1 state is astronomical. And  
2 once you really look at that,  
3 we play an important role in  
4 this great country.

5 And with that, Mr. Robby,  
6 I'll yield.

7 BY MR. GATTI:

8 Robby, I have a quick  
9 question.

10 BY MR. ABOUD:

11 Yes, sir.

12 BY MR. GATTI:

13 Sorry, Mayor, it may be  
14 for Senator Reese --

15 BY MR. ALLEN:

16 It is.

17 BY MR. GATTI:

18 When we were meeting with  
19 the General previously at Fort  
20 Polk, I want to do a follow up,  
21 he had issues with narrow roads  
22 between training sites, and a  
23 humvee, he was very fearful of  
24 collisions, and have we  
25 corrected that as a state?

1 BY MR. REESE:

2 There have really been  
3 significant investments. I've  
4 got to thank Don for that, and  
5 Secretary Shawn Wilson who  
6 actually -- they actually  
7 shuffled some road priorities  
8 around, and we're all ahead in  
9 the schedule, several roads  
10 that impact, that connect our  
11 training spaces.

12 They over laid those  
13 roads. They expanded the  
14 shoulders on those roads, re-  
15 striped those roads, and so  
16 that's just about every  
17 connecting road into what I  
18 would call South Polk training  
19 area.

20 And then next year, we've  
21 got 2 million dollars in  
22 Capital Outlay right now for  
23 Highways 117 going from LA 28  
24 to 118, which is how we access  
25 Peason Ridge Training Area, a

1 lot of the growth area for Fort  
2 Polk training. Next year,  
3 we'll pull ahead about 30  
4 million dollars to allow that  
5 project to go to construction.  
6 And that will be the widen  
7 bridges, paved six foot  
8 shoulders, re-marked, re-  
9 striped, straighten some of the  
10 curves and improve some of the  
11 real safety areas, which are  
12 those areas where we're  
13 crossing that state highway to  
14 access training land on both  
15 sides of that state highway.

16 So a lot of good work  
17 being done there based on  
18 meetings like this, when we get  
19 that feedback from those  
20 commanders and then implement  
21 them at a state level.

22 BY MR. GATTI:

23 I think we need to lean  
24 forward because we anti-ed up  
25 with Barksdale on this gate,

1                   and then we're doing the roads.  
2                   I think we need to look forward  
3                   to the next thing we can help  
4                   the with.

5                   BY MR. REESE:

6                                   Yeah, I agree.

7                   BY MR. ABBOUD:

8                                   Thank you very much,  
9                   Mayor. So now we'll go ahead  
10                  and proceed into a report from  
11                  Chris Goode with Roosevelt  
12                  Group. Again, we've got him  
13                  dialed him, so he'll go ahead  
14                  and report, and part of his  
15                  report will include the  
16                  Southeast Military Alliance as  
17                  well. So I'll go ahead and  
18                  pull up his slides.

19                                  Okay. Chris, and do we  
20                  have you here?

21    (NO ORAL RESPONSE)

22                   BY MR. ABBOUD:

23                                   Okay. Chris, we have the  
24                  slides up and you can begin  
25                  your presentation, sir.

1 BY MR. GOODE:

2 Great. I appreciate it,  
3 and hopefully everybody can  
4 hear me loud and clear here.  
5 Again, apologies, I couldn't be  
6 there in person. That was the  
7 intention, but we'll try to get  
8 through this as best we can,  
9 and I guess, I have 20 minutes  
10 to do so.

11 First, good morning. I  
12 heard Secretary Pierson,  
13 Senator Reese, and I know  
14 there's a TAG representative  
15 there, as well as others. I  
16 really appreciate the  
17 opportunity to provide this  
18 briefing. Obviously, there's a  
19 lot going on up on the Capitol  
20 Hill and in the services, so  
21 I'll try to move through these  
22 promptly.

23 So next slide, Robby. My  
24 intention is to cover a couple  
25 of topics here. We have a



1 couple of new teammates that I  
2 think everybody should be aware  
3 of. I want to touch real  
4 quickly on the FY22 to the FY23  
5 budget progression, and talk a  
6 little bit about our  
7 legislative priorities, and  
8 some ongoing actions.

9 And just touch, for the  
10 first time in a long time, you  
11 know, the discussion of BRAC.  
12 I don't like talking about it.  
13 I'm not a fan of the process.  
14 It's, you know, good for  
15 business, but it's not good for  
16 communities; and I don't think  
17 it's very good for DOD, but  
18 and, you know, unfortunately,  
19 the subject is creeping back  
20 into the narrative, and nobody  
21 should be surprised. So I'm  
22 going to touch on it a little  
23 bit toward the end.

24 So the next slide. And,  
25 Robby, can you hear me? Is

1 everything good?

2 BY MR. ABBOUD:

3 Yes, sir, we're tracking.

4 BY MR. GOODE:

5 Okay. Good. All right.

6 So real quick, two new  
7 teammates, one full time and  
8 one part time, and you know, I  
9 feel just kind of gimmicky and,  
10 you know, I get on the website  
11 and it's a million people, but  
12 you know, only ten of them are  
13 full time. But what I can tell  
14 you is the part time, you know,  
15 should you see the website, are  
16 all very much engaged. There's  
17 no wallpaper on that site, and  
18 we're pretty proud of who we  
19 bring on board, whether they're  
20 full time or not.

21 Teran Judd is full time.  
22 His most recent job was running  
23 all of the shared services and  
24 partnerships for the Air Force.  
25 And fortunately for the Air

1 Force, the shared services  
2 office is now located at the  
3 Roosevelt Group, but he is a  
4 great add to the team. When  
5 you look at some of these  
6 broader authorities, whether  
7 it's the ECIPs or DICP, RSIP,  
8 you name it, he's been all over  
9 this. He was sort of Ivan's  
10 counterpart for years, Ivan  
11 Bolden in the Army, and he's  
12 already jumped in and has  
13 provided a lot of value.

14 On the part time side,  
15 General J.T. Thompson, we're  
16 really thankful, mobile homes  
17 on our team, our full time team  
18 recommended J.T. You know, he  
19 was the former Space Missile  
20 Commander at LA Air Force Base  
21 but, you know, as prominently,  
22 J.T. ran a ton of programs in  
23 the Air Force, you know, PEO,  
24 Program Executive Officer, and  
25 just really big ACAP One

1 programs. He's going to start  
2 here pretty soon. He's been  
3 just taking some time off. But  
4 they'll be great additions.

5 So back into the  
6 presentation of the next slide,  
7 you know, just a big picture.  
8 I really only have one slide  
9 here on this but, you know,  
10 it's important to refresh our  
11 memories on the big numbers.  
12 You know, when you look at that  
13 dip on the right side, that  
14 was, you know, we all remember  
15 the sequestration days and the  
16 Budget Control Act. You know,  
17 those days are behind us for  
18 sure, and the money, in terms  
19 of DOD, has ticked up a bit.  
20 When you look at, you know,  
21 last year alone, the FY22  
22 numbers, you know, they went  
23 out pretty substantially, and  
24 Congress, as you may remember,  
25 added 25 billion to that

1 overall bottom line plus about  
2 another 10 billion by the time  
3 the Army budget was passed.

4 This year's budget, we're  
5 talking FY23, eight percent  
6 over last year, four percent  
7 more than Congress approved, so  
8 it's 813 billion. The problem  
9 is, you know, as if anybody's  
10 in the defense business in that  
11 room knows that inflation has  
12 become a real big problem, as  
13 well as supply chains.

14 So Congress is, I mean, as  
15 of right today, they're marking  
16 a House Armed Services  
17 Committee Bill in D.C., and  
18 there's no doubt that the  
19 number is going to go up. The  
20 Senate has basically already  
21 set 25 billion. And we have a  
22 company called GTS in Virginia  
23 Beach. They do a lot of IT  
24 work for the Navy. You know,  
25 the CEO said to me last week,

1 he said, you know, we've been  
2 building these big computer  
3 systems, the NCI system and,  
4 you know, circuitry and circuit  
5 cards can cost 300 grand and are  
6 now costing, you know, triple  
7 that, over a million dollars.  
8 So if you're in the firm fixed  
9 contract world of DOD, you're  
10 really in a hurt locker, and  
11 you know, that -- those voices  
12 are making their way through  
13 Congress.

14 So I think you're going to  
15 see an additional fairly  
16 sizable increase when '23 is  
17 finally finished. So, you  
18 know, what does that mean?

19 Next slide. So like I  
20 said, the armed services folks,  
21 they've completed all of their  
22 markups that are on the floor  
23 today. You know, what we do  
24 know, based on the marks, there  
25 is a four percent pay raise if

1           you have, you know, kids in the  
2           military, that will happen.  
3           There is no base closure round  
4           authorized, it was not  
5           requested, and I think  
6           everybody in this room would  
7           know by now if that was the  
8           case. So that's going to  
9           happen for at least a year.  
10          And there really hasn't been a  
11          significant destruction to  
12          MILCON and it's four structures  
13          in Louisiana, directly outside  
14          of these big busts that have  
15          basically hit almost all of the  
16          big MILCON projects, including  
17          Louisiana. So for the last  
18          three months, we've been  
19          working pretty hard to address  
20          that, and we'll get into that  
21          more specifically.

22                    You know, that hack that  
23                    appropriators marked up as  
24                    well, they bumped up, you know,  
25                    somewhat very tiny amount, but

1           this is all just now beginning.  
2           The Center on Services  
3           Committee on the Senate side  
4           have just completed their  
5           initial mark. It's not open to  
6           the public. They do that  
7           behind closed doors, unlike the  
8           House. And the appropriators,  
9           folks like Senator Kennedy, the  
10          committee he sits on, they're  
11          not even really out of the  
12          gates yet. So, you know, stand  
13          by and you can probably count  
14          on a continuing resolution  
15          again and, you know, one of  
16          these big (UNINTELLIGIBLE), you  
17          know, they combine the, you  
18          know, four out of the twelve  
19          bills, you know, they split  
20          them up and that's just how the  
21          business has been conducted  
22          over the last few years.

23                   And if you look at the big  
24                   picture, and I'm not going to  
25                   go through every service. Next



1 slide. You know, Louisiana has  
2 a lot of Air Force and, you  
3 know, you hear the narrative up  
4 on the Hill of, you know, we  
5 have the vest, to invest, and  
6 the Air Force has been really  
7 prominently trying to do that.  
8 It's always difficult because  
9 Congress -- it's hard to like  
10 retire one single plane off the  
11 runway, let alone an entire  
12 class because, you know,  
13 everything's political, and  
14 people have interests in these  
15 even older aircrafts that  
16 probably wouldn't survive five  
17 minutes in a national peer  
18 fight, but that's just where  
19 we're at.

20 Louisiana, thankfully,  
21 you're not in that right hand  
22 column, you know, we're not --  
23 we're fighting to recapitalize  
24 the mission, prominently down  
25 at Belle Chase, and the

1 Louisiana Air National Guard  
2 representatives know that as  
3 well as anybody. But, you  
4 know, you're not in a situation  
5 where an entire class of  
6 aircraft is going to disappear.  
7 If the F-15C is going to go  
8 away, because it can no longer  
9 basically fly, but they are  
10 going to get re-capitalized if  
11 everything goes according to  
12 plan.

13 So next slide. So let's  
14 talk about things we can  
15 control, right, as the defense  
16 community. You know, when you  
17 look at these big authorities,  
18 one that Louisiana should be  
19 very proud of, obviously, is  
20 the Defense Community  
21 Infrastructure Program, and  
22 these are projects, certainly,  
23 that are eligible to support,  
24 directly support the military  
25 installation but are off the

1 base.

2 We're now in our third  
3 year, you know, this program  
4 has grown from about 60 million  
5 to 90 million. It's going to  
6 go to 100 million. So this is  
7 real money. It makes sense to  
8 be a player in it. Don, under  
9 his leadership, has done just  
10 that. Fort Polk had a huge win  
11 the first year. Teran is  
12 helping on a smaller project in  
13 Louisiana for a Rotary Wing  
14 Wash Facility this year. Those  
15 plans are now being put  
16 together, and the proposals are  
17 due on Monday of July 18th.  
18 And, you know, again, we'll see  
19 where we go with those. Teran  
20 used to sit on the DICP  
21 selection panel, along with  
22 Ivan; so again, you know, it's  
23 been very helpful and hopefully  
24 this year we will see some  
25 success as well.

1                   But, you know, just again,  
2                   just promotional that, you  
3                   know, as long as we do this  
4                   (UNINTELLIGIBLE), this is one  
5                   good thing that the defense  
6                   community can pro-actively do  
7                   to get money. And keep in  
8                   mind, you know, you don't do  
9                   this in vacuum, you to have to  
10                  the Commander involved. One of  
11                  the good things, you know, Pat  
12                  Frank, he's a tough cookie to  
13                  work with, but Frank could  
14                  write a good letter and, you  
15                  know, he was very helpful with  
16                  Fort Polk's DICP application.  
17                  So you do need that kind of  
18                  activity with the Command level  
19                  inside the base.

20                  So next slide, just moving  
21                  along. Next, it looks like  
22                  this is in the House marked,  
23                  it's not a law yet. Again,  
24                  committees, they've embraced  
25                  DICP, they like it. They were,

1 I think, a little reluctant at  
2 the beginning, but they've seen  
3 the value, and I think this is  
4 going to stick.

5 Somebody mentioned spousal  
6 employment. Good on that  
7 person who mentioned that,  
8 because it does matter. And  
9 the next slide sort of speaks  
10 to that. The new, you know,  
11 flashy headline inside the Air  
12 Force if you're defense  
13 community, you need to know  
14 what Five & Thrive means. And,  
15 you know, it's basically an  
16 initiative by the spouse of --  
17 the wife of C.G. Brown, to  
18 again, put some attention on  
19 the big family initiatives,  
20 which are childcare, education,  
21 and healthcare, housing, and  
22 spousal employment.

23 You know, I'm not really  
24 sure how this is going to go  
25 down in terms of, you know,

1           what's back in the book in  
2           state. There have been a lot  
3           of meetings. Shirley Brown has  
4           been traveling to communities.  
5           How this really turns into  
6           solutions -- I don't want to  
7           say it's dubious, but when I  
8           look at some of our other  
9           clients dealing with housing in  
10          particular, it's not really a  
11          pretty picture. Housing, in  
12          particular, the Air Force is  
13          basically just, you know, taken  
14          the need and has set this up to  
15          the community, and that's been  
16          the position. So, you know,  
17          we'll see how all of this  
18          shapes up.

19                    Childcare in particular is  
20                    another sort of sore spot for  
21                    me. You know, we are throwing  
22                    money at childcare centers but,  
23                    you know, we have a real need  
24                    at Barksdale, and that's been a  
25                    total Barksdale driven

1 exercise, not an Air Force one,  
2 as far as I'm concerned. But  
3 anyway, again, here it's  
4 situational awareness.

5 So let's talk a little bit  
6 about BRAC. This is, you know,  
7 when you talk about defense  
8 communities, this is, you know,  
9 this is the third grail, right.  
10 This is the ultimate hot button  
11 issue. And, you know, the last  
12 BRAC was 17 years ago. You  
13 know, I'm not going to go into  
14 all the details. I've served  
15 on a BRAC round in 1995. You  
16 know, I went through the entire  
17 2005 realm representing 16  
18 communities. You know, the  
19 climate is very mobilized for  
20 this, you know, we'll be in a  
21 good spot to understand the  
22 process better than anybody.

23 I hope it doesn't get to  
24 that point but, you know, when  
25 we have folks like, you know,

1 Kendall standing up and saying  
2 again and again, he said I  
3 think we've tracked it at least  
4 two or three times, you know,  
5 we need a BRAC, we have too  
6 much excess capacity. And  
7 then, you know, the Chairwoman  
8 of the Defense and  
9 Appropriations Community  
10 basically said the same a few  
11 months ago.

12 You know, we'll see. I  
13 just think it's a tried and  
14 proven system, you know, when  
15 you have to show some, like  
16 you're doing something, you  
17 know, BRAC is not probably --  
18 BRAC's sort of an easy button,  
19 I think for the department to  
20 say we'll do it. In fairness  
21 of the department, they deserve  
22 a means to realign their  
23 missions. They should have  
24 that mechanism. I just think  
25 BRAC is a horrible way to do



1           it. And I think it's going to  
2           be bad for Louisiana. So, you  
3           know, in every discussion I  
4           have with members, you know,  
5           when it comes up, I just don't  
6           think it's the right way to go;  
7           but again, we're not there yet,  
8           but I do want everybody to know  
9           that this is being discussed.

10                        So next slide. So, you  
11           know, what we've done, we  
12           hadn't done a whole lot, to be  
13           honest with you. You know, we  
14           had a third party industry  
15           partner help us do a pretty  
16           limited, you know, SWOT  
17           analysis, Strengths Weaknesses  
18           Opportunities and Threats.  
19           That was back in 2017. You  
20           know, to me, the biggest  
21           enlightenment coming from that  
22           study was this really  
23           inaccurate data in the case of  
24           Fort Polk. You know, and  
25           that's not surprising because

1 the data is always horrible  
2 because it's done quickly, and  
3 the data's just not really  
4 good. And then you have sort  
5 of a pickup game of folks, 03,  
6 04 and 05's, making decisions  
7 in a compressed timeline. And,  
8 you know, it's shocking that  
9 things that can go wrong.

10 So, you know, again, we'll  
11 see, you know, that a couple of  
12 stall works that really snuffed  
13 out BRAC, you know,  
14 (UNINTELLIGIBLE) among them is  
15 leaving, retiring, and a lot of  
16 you guys know, we  
17 (UNINTELLIGIBLE) post solution  
18 to just set up. We're not even  
19 asking because we know it's  
20 just the answer's going to be  
21 no. But, you know, that focus  
22 or that climate is changing  
23 quickly.

24 So let me move towards  
25 Louisiana and give you just

1           some quick updates in terms of  
2           investments, and MILCON and  
3           bigger pictures and angles. So  
4           we talked about MILCON, and if  
5           you go to the next slide, the  
6           FY23 total, total Louisiana  
7           funding, you know, this is a  
8           really good year, again, for  
9           Louisiana. You know, the  
10          number -- the bottom left  
11          number, the 157 million, if the  
12          delegation and the communities  
13          did nothing, that's what you  
14          would have received. The 218  
15          is what you will receive based  
16          on, frankly, your delegation  
17          stepping up and getting --  
18          becoming part of the process to  
19          try to fix these big busts.

20                   The little box on the  
21          bottom is what we have been  
22          tracking and working. You  
23          know, you see the original  
24          amount, then you see that big  
25          bust amount which is, yeah,

1 really embarrassing almost,  
2 that these projects have come  
3 in so woefully underestimated,  
4 but that's just where we're at.

5 The good news is  
6 Representative Johnson did take  
7 advantage of the Community  
8 Project Funding Program. You  
9 only get so many bites of the  
10 apple, but he said I want --  
11 we've got to get the job done.  
12 You know, if you've been around  
13 long enough, like Don and  
14 Murray and Mike Reese, there  
15 are just some sort of key  
16 projects that we're always, you  
17 know, worried about because  
18 they were the projects that if  
19 you didn't get them, BRAC  
20 looked even, you know, darker.  
21 And getting the job done is  
22 one, and getting the Weapons  
23 Generation Facility was the  
24 other. Those are just some of  
25 the projects that really can

1           make a difference in things  
2           like BRAC. So the job has to  
3           get done, and it will get done,  
4           and it will get an additional  
5           61 million, and it will be  
6           built.

7                         Some of these other ones,  
8           I'm not so sure. You know,  
9           they've been appropriated, the  
10          IT System and the Child  
11          Development Center will get 32  
12          million. Whether the  
13          appropriator said they're both  
14          on the end funded priority  
15          list, so whether it be  
16          appropriations, they should and  
17          just fund them; we don't know  
18          yet, but we'll track it. If  
19          that happens, then, you know,  
20          we're off to the races.

21                        The Child Development  
22          Center, no money, we requested  
23          it, and we were told that it  
24          was a waste of time because it  
25          wasn't on a priority list. But

1 we requested it anyway, and we  
2 are going to keep requesting  
3 it, and I'm going to talk about  
4 that project a little bit  
5 later.

6 The long term outlook, if  
7 you go to the next slide, this  
8 is sort of the money slide  
9 that, you know, five years ago  
10 you would never see this slide  
11 when it came to Louisiana. But  
12 over the Five Future Years  
13 Defense Program, you know, you  
14 have about a half a billion  
15 dollars going to Louisiana,  
16 which is just fabulous. This  
17 doesn't even include the fall  
18 one, the Weapons Generation and  
19 Facility Projects at Barksdale,  
20 you know, even at the new  
21 barracks, another shooting  
22 range. So, you know, this is  
23 really good stuff which is --  
24 you have to -- they all have to  
25 be protected. We can't be on a

1 BRAC list and, you know, this  
2 is your future. Pumping a half  
3 a billion just in MILCON,  
4 that's not -- that's not  
5 payroll, that's not mission,  
6 that's nothing, that's just  
7 pure concrete, and it's a  
8 pretty good place to be.

9 So next slide. So we  
10 talked about the Community  
11 Project Funding. This is a  
12 funding, by the way, we use for  
13 LSU Shreveport. We've got 8  
14 million dollars to help finish  
15 their community -- their Viral  
16 Threats Center -- Emergency  
17 Viral Threats Center. It's a  
18 -- this is a great project, I  
19 mean great program. This is  
20 like you know, earmark central,  
21 and if you're not playing,  
22 well, you know, shame on you.  
23 So there's really, you know,  
24 there's really only two big  
25 accounts at place. It's the

1 HSH and DOD, and the DOD it's  
2 only RBT and even MILCON. So  
3 again, the last column, I'm  
4 sorry, the last row was Mr.  
5 Johnson in Louisiana, and the  
6 House amount added was 61  
7 million.

8 And then next slide. So  
9 that translated into an actual  
10 appropriation, which you can  
11 see there, so anyway. Unless  
12 somebody pulls it out, you  
13 know, during conference, which  
14 just isn't going to happen, I  
15 think the job is pretty much a  
16 done deal.

17 Next slide. So when you  
18 look at the Child Development  
19 Centers, 273 million in  
20 planning and design. You know,  
21 and I see this number like  
22 every year, and Barksdale is  
23 just like a lot. And, you  
24 know, Murray is as frustrated  
25 as we are with we -- there is a



1 1391 in Barksdale, just the  
2 last we have heard is that they  
3 do intend to start planning the  
4 design next month, and they  
5 should be able to get to the 35  
6 percent point by December. If  
7 that's the case, it doesn't  
8 necessarily knock us out of  
9 getting funded even next year.  
10 So, you know, this is something  
11 we just have to track and get  
12 done. This is like the old  
13 (UNINTELLIGIBLE) in the Air  
14 Force.

15 So that's sort of the big  
16 picture, the Congressional Bill  
17 coming money slides -- I've  
18 just got three quick slides on  
19 the bases, most of which has  
20 been covered.

21 But if you go to the next  
22 slide, we talked about Belle  
23 Chase in Louisiana. There is a  
24 lot going on at Belle Chase.  
25 You know, I will tell you that

1 Senator Kennedy and Mr. Scalise  
2 are very motivated and working  
3 very hard on Belle Chase. I'm  
4 just telling you that because  
5 I'm getting a lot of feedback.

6 We have been complaining  
7 about F-18's. The community  
8 down there is very good,  
9 they're very vocal, they're  
10 very persistent, and I think,  
11 you know, the message is out.  
12 Okay. And the bottom line,  
13 there's three separate ongoing  
14 actions that your delegation  
15 has done a really good job on,  
16 which is highlighting that, you  
17 know, that any reserve has to  
18 stay in the aggressive game.  
19 When you look at that past  
20 language, you know, it's just  
21 language. But there is a hack  
22 line to add eight new F-18s  
23 specifically to the U.S. Navy  
24 Reserve in Belle Chase.

25 There is a third piece

1           that I can't really speak to  
2           because it's not public yet.  
3           But in the Senate Armed  
4           Services bill there is a  
5           mission that the Navy wanted to  
6           get rid of that the joint  
7           (UNINTELLIGIBLE) and the Navy  
8           may be a good spot, a good  
9           place for Belle Chase. So  
10          we're going to be able to talk  
11          more about that, I think,  
12          pretty soon once that mark gets  
13          released.

14                        On the other side of the  
15          slide, is the Air National  
16          Guard, right? You know, the F-  
17          15EX F-35 Air National Guard,  
18          that hasn't gone away, that  
19          down select is still churning  
20          about. But the Secretary of  
21          the Air Force, as of two weeks  
22          ago, said yes, we are going to  
23          resource that mission and a  
24          decision on Louisiana,  
25          California, and Massachusetts

1 will be made by the end of the  
2 year.

3 The big bogie that was  
4 thrown into the system, you  
5 know, late by the Air Force, in  
6 front of Congress, was the Air  
7 Force has changed the number of  
8 F-15 buys from a 144 aircraft  
9 to 80. And that's a problem,  
10 you know, because there's more  
11 than just three Air National  
12 Guard Bases. There's, you  
13 know, resourcing, Kadena, and  
14 some other overseas bases as  
15 well as the FTU,  
16 (UNINTELLIGIBLE), etcetera,  
17 etcetera. So the Air Force is  
18 pretty squeezed, but they  
19 appear to be, at least as of  
20 today, still focused on making  
21 that decision by the end of the  
22 year.

23 All right. And then just  
24 two more slides. On Fort Polk,  
25 there's a big question as to

1 the whereabouts of, you know,  
2 of Fifth Corps and, you know,  
3 theater forces commands, multi-  
4 domain task force. That's all  
5 very real. This week I had a  
6 good opportunity to catch up to  
7 Chris Hughes, who many of you  
8 know as Twitty, and another  
9 former general, Steve Lanza,  
10 all working for us. And we had  
11 a really good conversation on  
12 what was going on. Neither of  
13 the -- and they pulsed their  
14 contacts pretty carefully.  
15 And, you know, all of them  
16 separately basically said, you  
17 know, the third  
18 (UNINTELLIGIBLE) at Fort Polk  
19 is not going to be part of this  
20 forward and continuous  
21 presence, and really focus on  
22 all of the (UNINTELLIGIBLE) and  
23 on a rotational basis. Rick  
24 Allen is right. They're  
25 probably going to be three of

1           these multi-domain task force.  
2           One in Hawaii, one probably in  
3           Alaska, and one working at  
4           European peace, which is  
5           already basically being stood  
6           up. These domain task forces  
7           are different than DCTs,  
8           they're different than SASCs.  
9           They are real people, real  
10          capabilities and, you know, you  
11          get into like first item chain  
12          stuff and, you know, it's a  
13          pretty deep dive for the Army  
14          to put these together and  
15          they're really focused on real  
16          BRACs and real missions.

17                   So the problem to me is  
18                   not so much, you know, standing  
19                   up headquarters and having  
20                   rotational forces. The problem  
21                   still, I hate to say it, but  
22                   it's BRAC. You know, Twitty  
23                   made a good comment to me, he  
24                   said, you know, he had been out  
25                   to Fort Drum just a few weeks

1                   ago, and he said, you know, I  
2                   stood there looking at a lot of  
3                   empty barracks, a lot of empty  
4                   buildings, and opt facilities,  
5                   and he said, you have to keep  
6                   your focus on the BRAC and what  
7                   Fort Drum and attempt to really  
8                   want in terms of their  
9                   headquarters and how they  
10                  provide oversight. So, you  
11                  know, nothing has really  
12                  changed in terms of the  
13                  hierarchal Army philosophy. So  
14                  it's going to happen at any  
15                  time. It could happen via real  
16                  world events, or be it BRAC,  
17                  which is almost designed to  
18                  make these things happen. So  
19                  I'll just leave you with that.

20                                 And in terms of Barksdale,  
21                                 yeah, you know, the Weapons  
22                                 Generation Facility moving into  
23                                 phase two is music to my ears.  
24                                 The gate and the road contract  
25                                 was executed either last week

1 or this week. I'm in touch  
2 with Garrett at Mr. Johnson's  
3 office emailed me this morning,  
4 and said the Air Force feels  
5 they will have some resources  
6 left over from the gate, road  
7 MILCON. So we'll see on that,  
8 but that's good news that they  
9 had enough appropriated money  
10 to actually execute that long  
11 awaited plan.

12 I think that's it for me,  
13 unless -- I feel like I've kept  
14 it to the 20 minutes, then we  
15 can have questions.

16 MR. ABBOUD:

17 Does anyone have any  
18 questions for Chris?

19 BY MR. PIERSON:

20 Chris, Don Pierson. I  
21 know that one of the questions  
22 the Governor will probably have  
23 would be around that gate  
24 access. It's great to know  
25 that the contract is now



1           executed. That contract and  
2           the details may have a  
3           projected completion date or  
4           something of that nature, any  
5           of those details that you could  
6           make available to us, or tell  
7           us where to go get that  
8           information, would be greatly  
9           appreciated.

10           BY MR. GOODE:

11                        I got it, and I'm going to  
12           go back to Garrett and ask him  
13           that because he was putting  
14           together some QFRs for the Air  
15           Force. He's been talking to  
16           the Air Force pretty regularly  
17           over the last few weeks on this  
18           contract, so I'll ask him that,  
19           in terms of start and  
20           anticipated stop completion.

21           BY MR. PIERSON:

22                        Thank you. Very helpful.

23           BY MR. ABBOUD:

24                        Okay. Hearing no other  
25           questions, so Chris, I don't

1 have to keep you line or if you  
2 need to drop off, you're  
3 certainly welcome to.

4 What we'll do at this  
5 point is proceed into the  
6 Executive Director's Report.  
7 Okay.

8 So I know we're running  
9 close to being out of time  
10 here, so I'll be brief in my  
11 comments. But I did want to  
12 take a moment to just provide a  
13 report out on recent LED  
14 activity in supporting veteran  
15 owned small business within the  
16 state. We have had a lot of  
17 investment in driving digital  
18 tactics to engage and highlight  
19 these veteran initiative  
20 programs and a lot of  
21 investment. We've got  
22 performance metrics as well  
23 that we'd like to share, as  
24 well as total numbers of  
25 businesses that have been

1 engaged throughout this  
2 process.

3 Before I do that, I would  
4 like to highlight, within your  
5 packets on the left hand side  
6 in the very back, there are two  
7 handouts that recap activity  
8 from 2021, as well as some  
9 initiatives we'll take on in  
10 terms of digital tactics and  
11 advertising this year, in 2022.  
12 So a lot of the presentation  
13 that I'll provide here, you can  
14 find that information in those  
15 handouts as well.

16 And again, this is just an  
17 outline of outreach efforts to  
18 support the veterans, update on  
19 how we've taken efforts to  
20 build the veteran owned  
21 business registration list, and  
22 then, Chris had referenced this  
23 earlier about the DICP program,  
24 the Defense Community  
25 Infrastructure Pilot Program.

1 LED is currently managing a  
2 DICP grant that was awarded in  
3 September of 2020, and Chris  
4 also mentioned that we're  
5 working to submit a second DICP  
6 grant, which I'll speak to a  
7 little later on in the  
8 presentation.

9 Let's see. I may be a  
10 little too far, yeah. So I'm  
11 sure we're looking -- it should  
12 be just fine. The top half of  
13 this slide really highlights  
14 the 2021 digital advertising  
15 tactics that LED has utilized.  
16 I'll cover these at a very high  
17 level, but really just want to  
18 build awareness of the type of  
19 investment we're putting into  
20 reaching veterans and  
21 highlighting the programs that  
22 we currently have. And that  
23 includes social -- so working  
24 the social networks, display  
25 ads, as well as banners and

1 other content that would appear  
2 on websites as you would browse  
3 different pages.

4 And then, as well, the  
5 bottom half of this slide are  
6 the LED programs. So really  
7 three primary programs that the  
8 Veterans First Business  
9 Initiative, the veteran  
10 initiative, and then the  
11 Pathway to Assist Veteran  
12 Entrepreneurs, which is PAVE.  
13 Just a high level overview.  
14 The Veterans First Business  
15 Initiative is a certification  
16 for business owners in which  
17 they can be added to a veterans  
18 first database that allows them  
19 to be searchable by individuals  
20 or companies who are interested  
21 in doing business with a  
22 veteran.

23 I do have numbers on that.  
24 We currently have 852 business  
25 enrolled in that program. More

1 on this one a little bit later  
2 because we are approaching a  
3 milestone for that program. So  
4 I'll cover that in a few  
5 slides.

6 The Veteran Initiative is  
7 access to procurement and  
8 contracting opportunities.  
9 Veterans get an additional  
10 twelve points any time they bid  
11 on procurement opportunities  
12 with the states, and this is at  
13 the state government level.  
14 And we currently have 357  
15 veteran owned businesses  
16 certified in Louisiana for the  
17 Veteran Initiative.

18 And then PAVE, which is a  
19 shorthand for the Pathway to  
20 Assist Veteran Entrepreneurs.  
21 This is more of an  
22 entrepreneurial boot camp.  
23 It's been done virtually. We  
24 work with partners, such as the  
25 State Office Small Business

1 Development Center at the state  
2 level, as well as the  
3 Department of Veterans Affairs,  
4 and the Louisiana National  
5 Guard. We've currently had  
6 forty -- over forty businesses  
7 go through this boot camp. A  
8 note here is that the state SPC  
9 office recently transitioned in  
10 the beginning of February. So  
11 we're currently entering into a  
12 new contract, and we'll restart  
13 that program in August. But I  
14 just provide that as a note,  
15 because since the transition  
16 started in February, no new  
17 business owners have gone  
18 through that program. But now  
19 that we'll relaunch in August  
20 of this year, we will ramp up  
21 activity again for the PAVE  
22 program.

23 So really just kind of  
24 providing high level breakdown  
25 of what we've done in 2021 with

1           these single image ads.  These  
2           here, typically, are just one  
3           image that will pop up in  
4           social media feeds such as  
5           Facebook.  They'll either pop  
6           up in the feed or on the right  
7           hand side of the page when  
8           you're viewing that platform.  
9           On the left side, we've  
10          targeted these ads for the  
11          general public.  And really the  
12          breakdown of numbers on these  
13          in 2021, when we ran this ad on  
14          the left, it received one  
15          million impressions.  And so  
16          when we say impressions, that's  
17          essentially every time this ad  
18          appears or is shown.  Of that,  
19          this drove over 1,400 visits to  
20          the website's landing page and  
21          resulted in one actual click of  
22          the apply now register button.  
23                    On the right hand side,  
24          this ad was targeted  
25          specifically for veterans in an



1 effort to have them sign up for  
2 the database. So this one was  
3 specifically for the Veterans  
4 First business Initiative. So  
5 when we ran the ad on the  
6 right, it delivered over  
7 320,000 impressions, and nearly  
8 400 page visits, and then six  
9 clicks on the actual apply and  
10 register now button.

11 So just to give you kind  
12 of a high level feel for the  
13 type of ads that were run for  
14 this single image promotion, as  
15 well as the type of impact and  
16 impressions it had when it was  
17 run.

18 Next is the carousel ad.  
19 So this one works just like the  
20 single image ad. The only  
21 difference is that this one can  
22 have multiple pictures or  
23 videos in which when it pops  
24 up, you can either click  
25 through them or swipe if you're

1 on a mobile device. But it  
2 works the same as a single  
3 image ad, in that you can  
4 target these ads specifically  
5 for a certain audience you may  
6 be looking to reach. So when  
7 this one was run last year in  
8 2021, we saw 1.2 million  
9 impressions, and 586 website  
10 visits, which led to seven  
11 clicks on the actual  
12 registration button. And this  
13 was done for all three of the  
14 Veterans Initiative Programs.

15 And then we also utilized  
16 digital tactics to leverage  
17 other programs that are  
18 available in LED's suite of  
19 small business services. So  
20 here you see the Hudson  
21 Initiative combined with the  
22 Veteran Initiative. So both of  
23 these support small business  
24 procurement and contracting  
25 opportunities. So here is just

1 kind of in tandem supporting  
2 both. And this was done on  
3 social, so Facebook, Instagram,  
4 as well as Linked-in. So there  
5 are kind of two separate  
6 pathways there. So for the  
7 social, which was Facebook and  
8 Instagram, it delivered over  
9 300,000 impressions, drove 348  
10 web page visits, and resulted  
11 in three clicks of the  
12 registration link. What we  
13 rated on Linked-in, we had over  
14 400,000 impressions, 761 web  
15 page visits, and ten clicks on  
16 the registration button.

17 Next, is the display ad.  
18 So again, this was both the  
19 Hudson Initiative and the  
20 Veteran Initiative. The  
21 display ads you can have a  
22 banner pop up or just a sample  
23 creative that would pop up, and  
24 no matter which page you visit,  
25 so if you were to visit

1 multiple news sites, you can  
2 see this banner or ad pop up on  
3 that web page. So you can,  
4 again, pick your target  
5 audience, and then based on  
6 certain keywords or history,  
7 you can have these ads pop up  
8 based on the audience you're  
9 trying to reach. So when these  
10 were run, we saw over 340,000  
11 impressions, 526 website  
12 visits, and 13 clicks on the  
13 apply now button within the  
14 website.

15 And finally, this is an  
16 example of the display ads for  
17 all three programs within the  
18 support of the Veterans  
19 Initiatives. These ads  
20 delivered over 370,000  
21 impressions, over 800 website  
22 visits, and four clicks on the  
23 apply now registration button.

24 So all this to say, in  
25 total, just conveying LED's

1           efforts in 2021, resulted in  
2           3.6 million impressions, over  
3           400,000 landing page visits and  
4           57 clicks on the apply now or  
5           register buttons within the  
6           site.

7                        So I know I read through  
8           these pretty quickly and pretty  
9           high level. We have a deeper  
10          dive in those two handouts  
11          located in your packets, and  
12          all the numbers that we just  
13          ran through are included in  
14          those handouts.

15                       Looking forward to this  
16          year, in 2022, some of the  
17          efforts we have in place are to  
18          continue to leverage those  
19          display ads, but also fold in  
20          some organic social. So this  
21          is kind of working social media  
22          efforts in which you will feed  
23          additional content, and that  
24          helps to drive further  
25          engagement with anyone who

1 follows or has an interest in  
2 the available veterans  
3 programs. This is, again, just  
4 a sample created that will be  
5 used. We expect over 500,000  
6 impressions per month when  
7 using the display ads.

8 And then I mentioned  
9 earlier that I would circle  
10 back to the Veterans First  
11 Business Initiative. We expect  
12 to hit 1,000 registered  
13 business in the state by  
14 November of this year. And so  
15 it's our intention to --  
16 normally around that time we'll  
17 start to leverage a lot of our  
18 digital tactics in support and  
19 to highlight Veterans Day. We  
20 expect that the way this is  
21 lining up, that we'll be able  
22 to further enhance leverage and  
23 highlight these programs, and  
24 this important milestone of  
25 hitting 1,000 registered

1 businesses. So this would  
2 include updated news releases,  
3 creatives, organic social, and  
4 additional display ads. And  
5 again, we're targeting that  
6 November 2022 date to go ahead  
7 and launch an extensive  
8 promotion and content driven  
9 highlighting of these programs  
10 and that important milestone.

11 And then just quickly,  
12 very briefly, I know Chris had  
13 referenced the DICP grants.  
14 LED was awarded back in  
15 September of 2020 a DICP grant,  
16 and it was the first iteration,  
17 it was the pilot program. We  
18 decided to apply in partnership  
19 with the Vernon Parish School  
20 Board. This is to construct  
21 and establish five learning  
22 centers at five different  
23 school sites within the Vernon  
24 Parish school system.

25 Each school would have a

1           technology center that's  
2           outfitted with a technology  
3           package. A few other elements  
4           includes STEM centers, updated  
5           security cameras, LED signage  
6           -- LED display signage. And  
7           so really just a quick look --  
8           you can see the five schools,  
9           Leesville High, Leesville  
10          Junior High, Pickering High,  
11          Pickering Elementary, and  
12          Vernon Middle schools.

13                    Again, each center's  
14           outfitted with technology  
15           packages in partnership with  
16           Vernon Parish. And it really  
17           addresses the military quality  
18           of life for military families;  
19           it enhances resiliency,  
20           improves military value, and  
21           also increases or boosts  
22           educational enhancement and  
23           opportunities for family's  
24           military spouses of Fort Polk.

25                    And I also would like to



1 highlight the Governor's  
2 support. LED came forward with  
3 the matching funds to qualify  
4 and meet the requirements for  
5 this grant, of course,  
6 supported by the Governor, as  
7 well as LED, in which we had a  
8 substantial involvement in  
9 pulling this together, and then  
10 the administrative process  
11 following that. Once it's  
12 awarded, there's a heavy lift  
13 to get it started. I'm happy  
14 to say that construction is  
15 underway at all five sites.  
16 Leesville High School, we are  
17 vertical. I think this image  
18 is as of the end of April, but  
19 you can see there that we have  
20 gone vertical at Leesville  
21 High. This is the Junior High  
22 -- Leesville Junior High. I've  
23 mentioned the technology  
24 package. This is the LED sign  
25 that's already in place outside

1 of Leesville Junior High. And  
2 finally, Vernon Middle, just to  
3 show that the concrete slab has  
4 been poured there and they'll  
5 have a STEM Center, as well as  
6 a technology learning center.

7 And that really completes  
8 my report. Chris also  
9 mentioned that we're working on  
10 another iteration of the DICP  
11 grant. This one in partnership  
12 with England Air Park for a  
13 helicopter wash rack, so that  
14 one is underway with an  
15 application due later this  
16 month. So a lot of substantial  
17 engagement. It requires a lot  
18 of coordination, but I think at  
19 the end of the day, you see the  
20 effectiveness of the leveraging  
21 partnerships and working  
22 together to advance these  
23 important initiatives.

24 Before we proceed, I'd  
25 like to open it up for any

1 questions if anyone had any?

2 Yes, sir?

3 BY MR. RICHARD:

4 Robby, the Veterans First  
5 Business Initiative, you  
6 indicated that we currently  
7 have a 1,000. Is that veteran  
8 owned?

9 BY MR. ABBOUD:

10 Yes.

11 BY MR. HAYES:

12 Have you ever considered  
13 veteran managed? I bet you  
14 could quadruple that number. A  
15 veteran managed organization?  
16 It's just a thought that a lot  
17 more veteran managed business  
18 that just veteran owned, and  
19 not that they would want any  
20 special consideration, but I  
21 just think it might be worthy  
22 to take a peek at owning  
23 veteran managed businesses that  
24 -- because you can't own a non-  
25 profit. But I know a lot of

1                   veteran managed. It's just a  
2                   thought.

3           BY MR. ABBOUD:

4                   Right. Yes, sir. Thank  
5                   you for that.

6                   Yes, sir?

7           BY MR. RICHARD:

8                   Thank you, Robby, for the  
9                   update on the Veterans  
10                  Initiatives. Maybe I  
11                  misunderstood, but your  
12                  conclusion was with the three  
13                  initiatives, three million plus  
14                  impressions went out, and the  
15                  results were clicks, I think  
16                  you called them, 50 somewhat,  
17                  out of three million?

18          BY MR. ABBOUD:

19                  Yes, sir. Yeah, those  
20                  were the performance metrics  
21                  that came out of the paid  
22                  advertising that we put forward  
23                  to enhance, to share, to  
24                  support, to promote the veteran  
25                  programs. And so really, at

1 the end of the day, yes, that  
2 was over three million  
3 impressions that we saw, which  
4 did lead to over 4,000 visits  
5 to the website, but when we  
6 look at actual clicks -- and  
7 keep in mind, this is just to  
8 the ads that we reviewed today,  
9 that we discussed today, but  
10 yes, it did lead to 57  
11 registration or application  
12 clicks within the website.

13 BY MR. RICHARD:

14 Well, I will submit to the  
15 Secretary that maybe we should  
16 be doing something else. I  
17 mean 50 clicks out of three  
18 million is woefully short of --

19 BY MR. PIERSON:

20 Well, what you're seeing  
21 here is we're leading our  
22 horses to the water. Three  
23 million impressions means it  
24 went across your device, your  
25 laptop, or your desk.

1 BY MR. RICHARD.

2 Right. I understand that.

3 BY MR. PIERSON:

4 And then out of that, some  
5 4,000 have said well, I'll go  
6 onto the landing page. And  
7 when we're talking to our  
8 veterans, they're not all  
9 business owners, but work at  
10 businesses perhaps. But  
11 speaking directly to that  
12 business owner puts you into  
13 another smaller universe, and  
14 for those that are willing to  
15 undergo the process here and  
16 sign up, you know, as we  
17 approach 1,000.

18 But I want you to know, as  
19 Robby has pointed out, that  
20 it's not for say what we call  
21 lack of trying. We're getting  
22 the information out. We know  
23 that. We've got the data that  
24 shows it. Whether or not they  
25 will voluntarily step forward

1 to be a part of the program,  
2 which puts them into a review  
3 with the Department of Veterans  
4 Affairs to make sure that they  
5 were not dishonorably  
6 discharged, and then it rolls  
7 over to LED where we make sure  
8 that they are in good standing  
9 with the Secretary of State,  
10 and then they become a veteran  
11 owned business. So there is a  
12 bit of a process there. Not  
13 every wants to engage in it.

14 And we welcome, you know,  
15 constructive feedback, but this  
16 is a good program. It's an  
17 important program approaching  
18 1,000 members. We think it's a  
19 pretty good number. I agree  
20 with you. It could be a lot  
21 better, but you know, there's  
22 not an active census out there  
23 on how many real veteran owned  
24 business there are, and why  
25 they're not engaging this. And

1 we're not stopping here. We're  
2 going to continue to push and  
3 push and push. And we'll  
4 continue to grow that number,  
5 and I hope to see it go from  
6 1,000 to 2,000 to 3,000 to  
7 4,000. But again, this is a  
8 pretty robust effort, and  
9 there's a significant amount of  
10 plumbing pushing that out.  
11 It's not a voluntary effort,  
12 it's being funded by LED as  
13 part of the marketing budget.

14 BY MR. RICHARD:

15 Oh, I'm well aware of the  
16 amount of money being spent,  
17 because I remember when the  
18 initiative started, and we all  
19 went to New Orleans and saw the  
20 Governor and Drew Brees, and I  
21 remember all of this stuff.  
22 It's just a tremendous amount  
23 of money for, in my view, a  
24 very small return.

25 BY MR. PIERSON:



1                   Yeah, I was surprised by  
2                   the results too.

3           BY MR. RICHARD:

4                   Second, the total of  
5                   veteran owned businesses that  
6                   count, the 800 and some odd,  
7                   but we started off at 760.

8           BY MR. PIERSON:

9                   No. I mean, I don't think  
10                  we started at that baseline. I  
11                  can check that for you but --

12          BY MR. RICHARD:

13                  But yes, sir, you  
14                  certainly can but --

15          BY MR. PIERSON:

16                  And that might have been  
17                  at the end of year one  
18                  promotion or something.

19          BY MR. RICHARD:

20                  There's -- pardon me?

21          BY MR. PIERSON:

22                  Maybe at the end of year  
23                  one, is that what you're  
24                  talking about?

25          BY MR. RICHARD:

1                   No. Whenever we started  
2                   this, there were several  
3                   initiatives, if you remember,  
4                   that was trying to -- that were  
5                   vying for this money. And at  
6                   any rate, I would simply ask  
7                   y'all to, just to look at what  
8                   the increase has been from what  
9                   the initial database was. And  
10                  I think that would be something  
11                  of interest.

12                 BY MR. PIERSON:

13                         Yeah.

14                 BY MR. RICHARD:

15                         And lastly, again, not to  
16                         occupy too much time, lastly, I  
17                         think all of this leads into  
18                         whatever we could do to comply  
19                         with the Governor's request  
20                         about three years ago that he  
21                         wanted Louisiana to be known as  
22                         a veteran's friendly place for  
23                         retirees, like in maybe some  
24                         states like Florida and Texas  
25                         and things of that nature. One

1 of the reasons why maybe these  
2 veterans owned businesses are  
3 not that interested, even the  
4 ones that took a look at the  
5 exposure, is, you know, what's  
6 the advantage, you know, what's  
7 the advantage of --

8 MR. WHITEHEAD:

9 What do they get out of  
10 it?

11 MR. RICHARD:

12 Pardon?

13 BY MR. WHITEHEAD:

14 What do they get out of  
15 it?

16 BY MR. RICHARD:

17 Yeah, I mean, just to put  
18 a plaque on the wall is one  
19 thing, but most of these  
20 businessmen are working 24/7  
21 just to make ends meet, and  
22 what's the advantage? So that  
23 would lead into a greater  
24 initiative whenever the budget  
25 process allows it or tries to

1 interject into the budget  
2 process on economics, what is  
3 it we could do -- and I think  
4 -- I thought, when I joined  
5 this council, I thought this  
6 was part of our mission. What  
7 can we do to promote veterans,  
8 and the initiatives to make  
9 veterans want to come to  
10 Louisiana, wanting Louisiana to  
11 benefit. What initiative could  
12 we take state-wide to make  
13 Louisiana more friendly to  
14 veterans?

15 A lot of it has to have  
16 been monetary. A lot of it has  
17 to do with monetary. But I  
18 mean, maybe there should be an  
19 initiative to go forward with  
20 something innovative to make  
21 people want to come here and  
22 retire, and make people want to  
23 stay in that retire out of Fort  
24 Polk, Belle Chase, and  
25 Barksdale. And it just seems

1 to me that we're lacking in  
2 that overall effort, and I just  
3 submit that as food for  
4 thought, sir.

5 BY MR. PIERSON:

6 So noted, sir.

7 BY MR. RICHARD:

8 So noted. That's a great  
9 term used in the military a  
10 great deal, so noted. Thank  
11 you very much for your time.

12 BY MR. ALLEN:

13 So I just wanted to point  
14 out that I was a part of one of  
15 the DICP applications that went  
16 forth from Fort Polk and it is  
17 a tremendous amount of work.  
18 And it would -- you know, it  
19 might have went the same way  
20 without my help, but there's  
21 one thing that's for sure,  
22 without you, Secretary, and  
23 you, Robby, that DICP -- that  
24 70 million dollar DICP would  
25 not have happened, period. So

1           thank you for your hard work on  
2           that. I know how hard y'all  
3           worked on it on a very short  
4           timeline. So thank you for  
5           that.

6                           And it kind of laid the  
7           groundwork for everyone else so  
8           that they understood that it  
9           was really possible to land one  
10          of those when there was only 70  
11          million dollars available, and  
12          over 400 million dollars' worth  
13          of applications hit the table.  
14          It was very impressive that you  
15          were able to pull that off for  
16          Vernon Parish. So thank you  
17          again for that.

18                   BY MR. ABBOUD:

19                           Thank you for that, Mayor.  
20           So I think we can go and move  
21           on. I'd like to ask the  
22           members if there are any other  
23           items to come before the  
24           council today, so other  
25           business or new business?

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(NO ORAL RESPONSE)

BY MR. ABBOUD:

Okay. I'm hearing none.  
So I'd like to open the floor  
for any questions or comments  
from members of the public?

(NO ORAL RESPONSE)

BY MR. ABBOUD:

Okay. Hearing none as  
well. So with that, I think  
for the sake of time, I think  
we're clear to go ahead and  
adjourn. Any motions to  
adjourn?

BY MR. JAKES:

So moved.

BY MR ABBOUD:

Any seconds?

BY MR. GATTI:

Second.

BY MR ABBOUD:

All in favor, please say  
aye.

(CHORUS OF AYES)

BY MR. ABBOUD:

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Thank you for your time.  
(Meeting was concluded at 12:05 p.m.)



## C E R T I F I C A T E

This certification is valid only for a transcript accompanied by my original signature and original required seal on this page.

I, Kristi Ryland, CCR (Certificate #27015) in and for the State of Louisiana, do hereby certify that on January 13, 2022, the above-entitled meeting was reported by me in the voice writer reporting method, prepared and transcribed under my personal direction and supervision, and is a true and correct transcript to the best of my ability and understanding; and that the transcript has been prepared in compliance with transcript format guidelines required by statute or by Rules of the Board;

That I am informed about the complete arrangement, financial or otherwise, with the person or entity making arrangements for deposition services and I have acted in compliance with the prohibition of contractual relationships, as defined by Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure Article 1434 and in the Rules and Advisory Opinions of the Board; and that I have no contractual relationship, direct or indirect, between a court reporting firm and any party litigant in this

1 matter, nor is there any such relationship between  
2 myself and a party litigant in this matter;

3 That I am not related to counsel or to the  
4 parties herein, nor am I otherwise interested in  
5 the outcome of this matter.

6 SIGNED THIS THE 30TH DAY OF JULY, 2022.

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KRISTI RYLAND, CCR #27015

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