

LOUISIANA SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP COUNCIL

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6 MEETING MINUTES FOR THE  
7 LOUISIANA SMALL BUSINESS AND  
8 ENTREPRENEURSHIP COUNCIL  
9 HELD VIA ZOOM  
10 ON THE 6TH DAY OF APRIL, 2021  
11 COMMENCING AT 1:03 P.M.  
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15 REPORTED BY: ELICIA H. WOODWORTH, CCR  
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1 Staff Appearances:  
2 Tatiana Bruce, Senior Program Manager  
Community Competitiveness & Small Business Services  
3  
4 Camille Campbell, Business Development Officer  
Community Competitiveness & Small Business Services  
5 James Chappel, Executive Director, State Economic  
Competitiveness  
6  
7 Sonja Christophe, Manager, Special Projects for the  
Assistant Secretary  
8 Stephanie Hartman, Director of Small Business Service  
Team, Community Competitiveness & Small Business  
9 Services  
10 Marlene Janetos, Marketing Supervisor  
Marketing & Communications  
11  
12 Solomon Lee, Business Development Officer  
Community Competitiveness & Small Business Services  
13 Don Pierson, Secretary of Economic Development  
14 Robin Porter, Attorney  
15 Patrick Witty, Executive Director of Community  
Competitiveness & Small Business Services  
16  
17 GUEST APPEARANCES:  
18 Phillip DeVillier, District 41, Acadia, Evangeline and  
St. Landry Parishes  
19  
20 Stuart Bishop, District 43, Lafayette Parish  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

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1 Board Appearances:  
2 Mandi Mitchell - Assistant Secretary, LED LSBE  
President  
3  
4 Allison Clarke - Deputy Secretary, Office of GeauxBIZ at  
Louisiana Department of State  
5 Kelisha Garrett - Executive Director, New Orleans  
Regional Black Chamber of Commerce  
6  
7 Bryan Greenwood - Associate Director, Louisiana Small  
Business Development Center  
8 Kenny Anderson - Executive Director, Stephenson  
Entrepreneurship Institute  
9  
10 Edward "EJ" Krampe III - President & CEO, MacLaff, Inc.  
Courtney Davis - CEO, Bart's Office Moving  
11  
12 Alta Baker - President & CEO, Safe Haven Enterprises,  
LLC  
13 Richard Vince Hayward - CEO, L.H. Hayward & Company, LLC  
14 Angelica Rivera - President, Colmex Construction  
15 E. René Soulé - Owner, E. René Soulé & Associates  
16 Iam Tucker - President & CEO, ILSI Engineering  
17 Zazell V. Dudley - Owner, Dudley Worldwide, LLC  
18  
19  
20  
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22  
23  
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1 MS. MITCHELL: Good morning, everyone. As  
2 Marlene continues to try and narrow down the background  
3 static issues, we will go ahead and get started.  
4 And I am required, because we are a public  
5 body meeting virtually, I am required to read the notice  
6 and certification for today's meeting, so before we get  
7 started I will do that.  
8 In accordance with Louisiana Revised Statute  
9 42:17.1, and there currently being in effect a public  
10 health emergency as declared by Governor John Bel  
11 Edwards in Executive Proclamation 25 JBE 2020 issued on  
12 March 11th, 2020 in response to the threat posed by  
13 COVID 19, which remains in effect pursuant to Executive  
14 Proclamation 66 JBE 2021 issued on March 30th, 2021,  
15 which declared that a statewide public health emergency  
16 continues to exist, and which remains in effect from  
17 March 31st, 2021 to April 28th, 2021, or as extended by  
18 any subsequent proclamation, unless terminated sooner,  
19 this notice shall serve as a certification by the  
20 presiding officer of the Louisiana Small Business and  
21 Entrepreneurship Council that a declared state of  
22 emergency exists through April 28th, 2021 in response to  
23 the threat posed by COVID 19 as reflected in Executive  
24 Proclamation 66 JBE 2021 issued on March 30th, 2021, an  
25 in-person meeting of the LSBE conducted in accordance



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1 with otherwise ordinary provisions of the Louisiana Open  
2 Meetings Law would be detrimental to the health, safety  
3 and welfare of the public, and the agenda of the meeting  
4 to be held on the 6th day of April 2021 meets one or  
5 more of the provisions of Revised Statute 42:17.1.  
6 Considering the foregoing and pursuant to  
7 Revised Statute 42:17.1, the Louisiana Small Business  
8 and Entrepreneurship Council meeting of April 6th, 2021  
9 at 1 p.m. will be held via videoconference and in a  
10 manner that allows for observation and input by members  
11 and members of the public as set forth in the notice.  
12 Also, for members of the public that are  
13 watching our meeting, public comments on any of the  
14 agenda items may be submitted via e-mail to  
15 Sonja.Christophe2@la.gov, S-o-n-j-a, dot,  
16 C-h-r-i-s-o-p-h-e 2@la.gov, for any members of the  
17 public that are observing our meeting today.  
18 Now that we've gotten the certification out  
19 of the way, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Krampe, I'll turn it over  
20 to you to call our meeting to order.  
21 MR. KRAMPE: Good day, everyone. Thank you,  
22 Mandi, and that was quite a mouthful.  
23 MS. MITCHELL: Yes.  
24 MR. KRAMPE: Thank you-all for being here  
25 today. I realize that we, as business people and in

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1 economic development, have had a lot on our plates in  
2 the last, you know, year and a couple of months between  
3 COVID and a terrible hurricane season and a big freeze  
4 already this year. I'm exhausted. So I really  
5 appreciate you being here.  
6 I think the team has done a great job  
7 with this report, so I look forward to reviewing it with  
8 everybody, and I think next step we'll have rollcall.  
9 MS. MITCHELL: Yes. Thank you, Mr.  
10 Chairman. And at this time, I'll turn it over to Ms.  
11 Sonja Christophe to call off the roll.  
12 MS. CHRISTOPHE: Mandi Mitchell.  
13 MS. MITCHELL: Present.  
14 MS. CHRISTOPHE: Allison Clarke.  
15 MS. CLARKE: Present.  
16 MS. CHRISTOPHE: Kelisha Garrett.  
17 MS. GARRETT: Present.  
18 MS. CHRISTOPHE: Bryan Greenwood.  
19 MR. GREENWOOD: Present.  
20 MS. CHRISTOPHE: Kenny Anderson.  
21 MR. ANDERSON: Present.  
22 MS. CHRISTOPHE: E.J. Krampe.  
23 MR. KRAMPE: Present.  
24 MS. CHRISTOPHE: Courtney Davis.  
25 MS. DAVIS: Represent.

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1 MS. CHRISTOPHE: Cassie Felder.  
2 (No response.)  
3 MS. CHRISTOPHE: Alta Baker.  
4 MS. BAKER: Present.  
5 MS. CHRISTOPHE: Zazell Dudley.  
6 MS. DUDLEY: Present.  
7 MS. CHRISTOPHE: Vince Haywood.  
8 MR. HAYWOOD: Here.  
9 MS. CHRISTOPHE: Angelica Rivera.  
10 MS. RIVERA: Present.  
11 MS. CHRISTOPHE: E. René Soulé.  
12 MR. SOULÉ: Present.  
13 MS. CHRISTOPHE: Iam Tucker.  
14 MS. MITCHELL: I saw Ms. Iam. Okay. She's  
15 here as well.  
16 MS. TUCKER: I'm here, y'all. Sorry. I can  
17 barely hear.  
18 MS. MITCHELL: That's all right.  
19 Thank you. That concludes the rollcall,  
20 Mr. Chairman, and we have a quorum.  
21 MR. KRAMPE: Very good. Thank you.  
22 You want to ask for the adoption of minutes?  
23 MS. MITCHELL: Yes, sir.  
24 At this time --  
25 MR. KRAMPE: So I'd like -- can you handle

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1 that, Mandi?  
2 MS. MITCHELL: Go ahead, Mr. Chairman.  
3 MR. KRAMPE: Okay. I'd like to ask for a  
4 motion to adopt the minutes of January 26, 2021 meeting,  
5 please.  
6 MR. ANDERSON: I'll move to adopt them.  
7 This is Kenny.  
8 MS. DUDLEY: Second. This is Zel.  
9 MR. KRAMPE: Thank you very much.  
10 Is there any further discussion?  
11 (No response.)  
12 MR. KRAMPE: Hearing none, I'll ask for a  
13 vote.  
14 All those in favor, please say "aye."  
15 (Several members respond "aye.")  
16 MR. KRAMPE: Thank you for your votes.  
17 Is there anyone in opposition?  
18 (No response.)  
19 MR. KRAMPE: Hearing none, this is  
20 unanimous. Thank you very much.  
21 Next we will have Mandi to discuss the 2021  
22 Annual Report.  
23 MS. MITCHELL: Yes, sir. Thank you. And I  
24 will be very brief. We did send this report out to  
25 you-all about a week and a half ago.



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1 As we discussed at our January meeting,  
2 because the report is largely reporting of data and  
3 interactions with small businesses, in addition to  
4 recommendations, that we will largely repurpose our 2020  
5 report contents with updated data for our 2021 report.  
6 So each year we are required by the  
7 legislature to compile this report, and the report  
8 includes the state of small business in Louisiana,  
9 including the number of small businesses operating in  
10 our state, and a geographic and demographic breakdown of  
11 those businesses, a full accounting of small business  
12 resources available in Louisiana, as well as the catalog  
13 of services provided by the department. Those are the  
14 required elements of the report.  
15 And then optionally the Small Business  
16 Entrepreneurship Council may include in the report  
17 recommendations to LED and to the Governor and to the  
18 legislature as it pertains to ways that we can improve  
19 our small business involvement in the state.  
20 And so we have presented to you or to the  
21 members the 2021 report. What you'll see different to  
22 the report is a new section on small business recovery  
23 recommendations, recommendations that we discussed at  
24 our January meeting, and thanks to Bryan Greenwood for  
25 consolidating those and preparing those with me, in

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1 addition to the notes that I gathered pertaining to  
2 supporting small businesses before, during and after  
3 natural and man-made disasters. And so we hope you've  
4 had an opportunity review that report.  
5 We do need to go ahead and obtain a vote on  
6 the report and any discussion you'd like to have, but we  
7 do need to submit this report to the legislature. Their  
8 session begins April 12th, and we've already seen some  
9 interesting items in the legislative session. I think  
10 that our combination of recommendations from LED,  
11 recommendations from our 2021 report, recommendations  
12 from the Office of State Procurement, recommendations  
13 from private sector and other small business service  
14 providers and the HSR2 subcommittee, the subcommittee on  
15 women, minority and veteran-owned businesses. So we're  
16 beginning to see some excellent movement as it pertains  
17 to improving our state's ecosystem for small business,  
18 and this report, we believe, in the form that it is in,  
19 will only help further the cause.  
20 So, Mr. Chairman, I think at this time any  
21 discussions or a motion to adopt the report will be in  
22 order.  
23 MR. KRAMPE: Thank you very much.  
24 Would anyone like to make a motion to accept  
25 the report 2021, the annual report?

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1 MS. ALTA: I move that we accept the report  
2 for 2021. Alta Baker.  
3 MR. KRAMPE: Thank you.  
4 MS. DUDLEY: I second. This is Zel Dudley.  
5 MR. KRAMPE: Okay. Thank you very much.  
6 Is there any further discussion or comments  
7 that anyone would like to make?  
8 (No response.)  
9 MR. KRAMPE: I would like to say that the  
10 report gives us some strong things to work on in the  
11 upcoming year. Hopefully we'll be able to do that as a  
12 group and together instead of virtually, but I think it  
13 gives us a nice body of work to be able to move forward  
14 with, so I'm excited about it.  
15 MS. MITCHELL: Yes, sir.  
16 MR. KRAMPE: But I don't hear anymore  
17 discussion. I'll take a vote.  
18 All of those in favor, say "aye."  
19 (Several members respond "aye.")  
20 MR. KRAMPE: Is there any opposition?  
21 (No response.)  
22 MR. KRAMPE: Hearing none, this passes  
23 unanimously. Thank you very much.  
24 MS. DUDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this is Zel. I  
25 certainly don't have any opposition, but I just had a

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1 followup.  
2 How does the state define small business in  
3 terms of the revenue and employee count?  
4 MS. MITCHELL: So we, LED, we use the SBA's  
5 definition of small business. We also, from our  
6 programming perspective, we have programs that are  
7 geared towards micro businesses as well as a grant  
8 program or incentive. We carve out, some programs are  
9 under 100 and fewer employees, and some 50 or fewer. It  
10 depends on the program or incentive that we're talking  
11 about. And same thing with the legislative subcommittee  
12 that has been focused on small business issues, they're  
13 really focused on small and micro businesses.  
14 MS. DUDLEY: Okay.  
15 MS. MITCHELL: That's a long-winded answer  
16 to say it depends on which program we're talking about,  
17 but LED does recognize the SBA definition for small  
18 business.  
19 MS. DUDLEY: Got you. Okay. Thank you.  
20 MR. KRAMPE: Thank you for that question.  
21 Anyone else?  
22 (No response.)  
23 MR. KRAMPE: Mandi, I'll turn it over to you  
24 to introduce our guests.  
25 MS. MITCHELL: Yes. Thank you very much,



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1 Mr. Chairman.  
 2 We, as promised at a previous meeting, we  
 3 have invited two very esteemed guests to be with us  
 4 today, two of our leaders at the legislature who happen  
 5 to be from Acadiana, so my area of the state. No bias  
 6 there. But we have two leaders among us, who, by the  
 7 way, for our members, for your benefit, are actually  
 8 small business owners themselves. So they are boots on  
 9 the ground alongside you-all in running small businesses  
 10 in the State of Louisiana. So they have situational  
 11 awareness of our small business ecosystem, of our  
 12 environment and our regulatory framework and our tax  
 13 structure against small businesses.  
 14 And so we know the legislative session is  
 15 upon us. It begins on April the 12th, and in between  
 16 legislative session, our leaders both work on policy  
 17 recert so at the upcoming session, they can put forth  
 18 reform recommendations. And so we all know, unless  
 19 you've been under a rock, we all know that tax reform is  
 20 a really, really big issue for this upcoming legislative  
 21 session, so we wanted to have our leaders of the House  
 22 Ways and Means Committee, which is where all the actions  
 23 happen, to come and talk to us all today about reforms  
 24 for the upcoming session.  
 25 So at this time, I'd like to introduce and

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1 turn it over to House Ways and Means Chairman,  
 2 Representative Stuart Bishop, along with House Ways and  
 3 Means member, Representative Phillip DeVillier, again,  
 4 who are both small business owners and have been working  
 5 very hard on proposals for the upcoming legislative  
 6 session.  
 7 So, Mr. Chairman Bishop, I will turn the  
 8 floor over to you.  
 9 MR. BISHOP: Thank you, Mandi. How are  
 10 y'all? Thank y'all for having us to today.  
 11 Mandi, we have -- Phillip has been part of  
 12 the group. We have been meeting every week for the last  
 13 five months to identify what are the key parts for tax  
 14 reform for the State of Louisiana. We have the most  
 15 antiquated tax system probably in the United States.  
 16 Even Mississippi is actually making some moves to do  
 17 things better than us. So we've identified several  
 18 constitutional amendments, which will be tied to the  
 19 bills, to get it to a vote of the people. And, you  
 20 know, I will honestly tell you, our number one will be  
 21 streamline, also known as centralized, and that will be  
 22 the speaker's bill with my name on it, and I intend on  
 23 moving very quickly. As of two hours ago, I have 1005  
 24 tax bills coming to my committee and a very short  
 25 session, so I have no choice but to move fast.

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1 Centralized is going to be set up where we  
 2 will collect the sales tax, the state will. When I say  
 3 "we," the state will. But the board will be made up of  
 4 four locals and four people with the state, and it's  
 5 intended, and I think it really will, it's intended to  
 6 make it easier for businesses to pay their taxes to one  
 7 place. I think we have the sheriff's association and  
 8 the police juries, I think we have them in a comfortable  
 9 place now because, in all honestly, there's not a lot of  
 10 meat and potatoes to it. It is basically a  
 11 Constitutional amendment that's going to allow the  
 12 locals to decide do we still want to be one of only  
 13 three states that has a decentralized tax system.  
 14 And if you really dig into it and you look  
 15 at those that were adamantly opposed in the beginning, I  
 16 promise you would be absolutely shocked. And I  
 17 understand why they were adamantly opposed to it. I  
 18 think we have them all in a comfortable position, and  
 19 that will be our number one priority starting, we go in  
 20 on the 12th, starting on Tuesday the 13th. So that is  
 21 an extremely important bill for the state. I'm tired of  
 22 hearing people tell me, well, the tax system here is so  
 23 messed up that they're going to Texas, they're going to  
 24 Florida, but nobody -- you know, people are leaving New  
 25 York and California and they're not coming to Louisiana

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1 and we have to fix that. And we have to help out, we  
 2 have to help out small businesses and help them succeed  
 3 where they know, I sent -- I remit my taxes here, I  
 4 remit my taxes there. And then the important thing to  
 5 realize in Wayfair versus South Dakota, when the Supreme  
 6 Court ruled on it, if we don't get our remote  
 7 collections -- and I'm not picking on Amazon, but if we  
 8 don't collect remote collections or remote sales, then,  
 9 therefore, anything we've collected in the past, it's  
 10 possible they come back and they tell us "Well, you've  
 11 got to repay this." All it takes is one lawsuit, and  
 12 the rurals and the locals can't afford for that to  
 13 happen. This is something that's been trying to be done  
 14 for decades, and I honestly believe that this is the  
 15 year that there is an appetite to correct this issue.  
 16 And I meet with my counterpart on the senate  
 17 side on a weekly basis, and it seems the senate is on  
 18 board. And I don't know how long it's been, and, Mandi,  
 19 you probably don't remember how long it's been either,  
 20 since the Senate and the House were on the same side of  
 21 a subject. So that is going to be number one.  
 22 I'm going turn it over to Phillip because he  
 23 is one of the major architects, and I will go into my  
 24 personal two bills. One is, I drafted a bill to look at  
 25 all credits, all deductions, all incentives that we have



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1 on the books in the State of Louisiana, and my goal is  
 2 to sunset them in four years. That way we can come back  
 3 in four years -- I won't be there, but we'll go back in  
 4 four years and we can pick the winners and the losers.  
 5 We sunset every department in the state. Why are we not  
 6 sunsetting these credits? We have credits that have  
 7 been on there for at least four decades. When I drafted  
 8 the bill, when they handed it to me, it's 98 pages long.  
 9 That's how many deductions there are on there. So  
 10 that's my capital outlay reform.

11 Another thing it will do is it will stop  
 12 capital outlay from going to nongovernment entities.  
 13 That's not going to be a popular part, but it's time we  
 14 do live within our means and look at what works and what  
 15 doesn't work.

16 Another portion of it, it required any new  
 17 credits, deductions, incentives coming forward that it's  
 18 a two-thirds vote. A lot of other states do this, and  
 19 it's smart bookkeeping because when I got capital outlay  
 20 last year and I saw the projects in there, we have over  
 21 \$2-billion worth of projects in Priority 5. There's no  
 22 way you can move \$2-billion worth of projects into from  
 23 5 to 1 or 5 to 2. And I think the state really, what  
 24 the state needs to focus on is roads, bridges, clean  
 25 water, ports, airports and hospitals, and that is my

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1 goal. That was my goal last year. That's why I set up  
 2 the Capital Outlay Savings Program because we were going  
 3 to spend all of the surplus cash that we had. Well,  
 4 that doesn't make sense to me. That's not how I run my  
 5 business. Just because I make a dollar doesn't mean I  
 6 should spend two dollars. It actually means I need to  
 7 save 50 percent of it for a rainy day.

8 So those bills, and I've done -- the other  
 9 bill will actually lower the bond capacity. Right now  
 10 we're at \$385-million, and we have to live within our  
 11 means. So it will gradually phase down our bond  
 12 capacity so we can figure out -- and, look, I'm tying my  
 13 own hands as a chairman, and I realize that, by reducing  
 14 bond capacity because capital outlay has always been  
 15 used as a promise for political favor, "If you vote for  
 16 this, I'm going to get you this project." Well, I'm not  
 17 really interested in political favors. I'm interested  
 18 in what's doing the right thing for the people of  
 19 Louisiana, the businesses of Louisiana, and so I'm not  
 20 looking to make a bunch of friends on this, but I'm  
 21 looking to make an impact on the State of Louisiana.

22 On that, I will turn it over to Phillip  
 23 because he has been a huge architect of it. And, Mandi,  
 24 if you could turn it over to Phillip, I would appreciate  
 25 it.

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1 MS. MITCHELL: Yes, sir. Thank you.  
 2 Rep DeVillier, the floor is yours, and then  
 3 we'll reserve a little time to ask any questions of both  
 4 of you before you-all go. I know y'all have a tight  
 5 schedule and that y'all are getting ready for session  
 6 coming up. So, Rep DeVillier.

7 MR. DEVILLIER: Thank you so much, Mandi.  
 8 Thank you so much, Chairman, all of your other leaders  
 9 throughout the process today -- (Zoom audio  
 10 interruption) -- noise I guess on the mic and my  
 11 children are running around, so excuse us for that.

12 But, look, we've been meeting for several  
 13 months, and I'm part of that committee that -- (Zoom  
 14 audio interruption) -- going over basically what vision  
 15 we'd like to see for Louisiana, and we all agree that,  
 16 you know, the problems we have and ways to address the  
 17 tax structure, to make it in the way that's predictable  
 18 and just making it in a way to -- that's kind of what  
 19 our vision was going into those meetings, and we came  
 20 out with -- (Zoom audio interruption).

21 Something that we're all aware of, and we  
 22 have a lot of new legislators this year, and, you know,  
 23 when we're going around and talking to other legislators  
 24 about the things that we came up with, we kind of wanted  
 25 to paint them a picture of what things look like, and we

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1 start off that with explaining -- (Zoom audio  
 2 interruption) -- around \$10-billion, and out of that  
 3 \$10-billion, almost 80 percent of it comes from sales  
 4 tax and income tax, whether it's personal or corporate  
 5 income. So it's something important, especially for the  
 6 new members.

7 Another thing that's extremely important is  
 8 that we have a .45 cent temporary sales tax that is due  
 9 to roll off the books in 2025. That .45 generates for  
 10 the State of Louisiana about \$450-million. So we know  
 11 in a couple years that tax is due to roll off the books,  
 12 and we need to be prepared on how we're going to make up  
 13 for that reduction in collections.

14 Another thing that is very, very important  
 15 is that the members understand how the federal income  
 16 tax is tied to the state income tax through the federal  
 17 income tax deduction. Many of you remember a few years  
 18 ago when the President at the time, Donald Trump, did a  
 19 tax cut, the federal income tax cut, and what that did  
 20 for the State of Louisiana, when our federal income  
 21 taxes went down, because we allowed that deductibility,  
 22 it caused our state income taxes to essentially go way  
 23 down, and -- I'm sorry -- way up, and then, you know, it  
 24 helped prop up the state budget from anywhere from four  
 25 to \$500-million. And we do expect that the Trump tax



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1 cut will go away, especially with the new congress. But  
 2 if it doesn't, it is something that is going to sunset  
 3 at some point.  
 4 So with the .45 rolling away, and that's  
 5 450-million, and the Trump tax cut going away as well,  
 6 you know, we could be seeing another billion-dollar  
 7 shortfall in a very near future. So we just kind of  
 8 wanted to kind of move into what were some of the bills  
 9 we talked about. Certainly, you know, we talked about  
 10 infrastructure, which Chairman Bishop just spoke on, and  
 11 it's going to be a huge, huge win. (Zoom audio  
 12 interruption) -- by addressing the capital outlay  
 13 situation, things that we can do in Louisiana, but we  
 14 what we were really focused on was tax reform, and I'm  
 15 going to start with off with personal income tax.  
 16 Today we have three different brackets.  
 17 Personal income tax generates about \$3.6-billion for the  
 18 State of Louisiana. The three different brackets we  
 19 have are 2, 4 and 6. So with the simple, fair and  
 20 predictable structure, we wanted to simplify by going to  
 21 a flat-rate income tax deduction, the excess itemized  
 22 deduction and increase the standard deduction. This was  
 23 the best -- we're trying to keep what's called a revenue  
 24 neutral.  
 25 The first one we talked about was the

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1 corporate income tax. We have five different rates in  
 2 the corporate income tax, 4, 5, 6, 7, and then the  
 3 highest rate is 8 percent. The corporate income tax  
 4 generates about \$400-million for the State of Louisiana,  
 5 and combined, between personal and corporate, you're  
 6 looking at about \$4-billion that's generated for the  
 7 state general funds in Louisiana.  
 8 Again, with the vision of a simple, fair and  
 9 predictable tax on the corporate side, we are going with  
 10 a rate of around 5 percent. That rate, in order to  
 11 accomplish that rate, we're talking about removing the  
 12 federal income tax deduction. But just that alone  
 13 leaves us with about \$200-million short. If you  
 14 remember a couple years ago Walt Leger had a bill that  
 15 passed the House and the Senate, went to the vote of the  
 16 people. Well, it was a flat rate of 6.5. You need to  
 17 be a little more aggressive with that number, which is  
 18 the franchise tax -- (Zoom audio interruption) --  
 19 \$40-million for the State of Louisiana.  
 20 So, you know, when you think about the one  
 21 rate of 5 percent on the corporate income side and  
 22 phasing out the franchise tax, we need to make up about  
 23 \$600-million. So, you know, I've argued dynamic scoring  
 24 many, many times. That doesn't seem to fare really well  
 25 in the Senate. So we are going to be bringing a bill to

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1 actually cut credits and exemptions by 50 percent.  
 2 I haven't gotten the fiscal note on that  
 3 bill yet to see, you know, how that will affect these  
 4 other corporate and franchise tax bills, but -- hold on  
 5 a second. I've got a call coming in.  
 6 Okay. So with that being said, you know,  
 7 we're trying to find the best tax policy that's  
 8 possible, and what I think this is going to do is force  
 9 everyone to come to the table. When you start cutting  
 10 credits and exemptions, bringing good corporate and  
 11 personal tax policy, we feel like that forces everyone  
 12 to the table, and then we can have a very real and  
 13 honest conversation about what people really want for  
 14 the State of Louisiana, do they want good tax policy or  
 15 do they want all of these credits and exemptions. And  
 16 we are aware that this is very near and dear to L&ED's  
 17 heart, so we're going to have our eyes and our ears open  
 18 to, you know, the way y'all feel about that.  
 19 We also have a bill to remove the inventory  
 20 tax. When you think about the history of the inventory  
 21 tax, you know, 30, 40 years ago the inventory tax was  
 22 maybe \$30-million, and then when the state decided to  
 23 give a credit on it, that tax went from \$30-million to,  
 24 in 2015, it was almost \$600-million. That's because the  
 25 state started giving credits back on this inventory tax,

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1 and, I mean, it just grew and grew and grew, and it was  
 2 essentially just a passthrough, you know, from the  
 3 businesses back to the local governments in the form of  
 4 income taxes. And if any of y'all get really bored,  
 5 please let me know and I can shut up.  
 6 But, anyway, you know, in 2015 there was  
 7 legislation that came about in the past that only  
 8 offered businesses 75 percent on the credit side of the  
 9 inventory tax. And then in '16 Rick Ward passed the  
 10 bill that said you couldn't get ITEP and inventory tax  
 11 credits. So in the last four years we saw inventory tax  
 12 and credit go from, like I said, almost \$600-million to  
 13 under 300-million today. So that was a huge deduction  
 14 in the tax and the credit, and we feel like it's a bad  
 15 tax and we need to get rid of it.  
 16 We should also look at maybe try to find the  
 17 Governor's Executive Order on the ITEP on the 80/20 side  
 18 and possibly getting rid of unfunded mandates and some  
 19 unfunded mandates for the local government.  
 20 Now, with all of that being said, I know you  
 21 heard Chairman Bishop mention about one of the biggest  
 22 things that we're all focused on this session, and that  
 23 is the streamlined sales tax commission, which is also  
 24 known as centralized sales tax. You know, I've been all  
 25 over the state, and I'm going to just talk a little bit



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1 about some of the stories I've heard. When you're a  
 2 small business owner specifically and you're collecting  
 3 these sale taxes across so many different municipalities  
 4 and then trying to remit it to the different collectors  
 5 across the state, it is extremely expensive to these  
 6 business owners, not to mention how complicated and  
 7 really unfair it is for these small, local businesses to  
 8 compete with businesses that are located outside of the  
 9 State of Louisiana.

10 You know, Chairman Bishop talked a little  
 11 bit about the Wayfair decision that happened in 2018.  
 12 If you look at the last seven months of the Remote Sales  
 13 Tax Collection, it was about \$178-million, and of that,  
 14 the State of Louisiana got right at 80-million and  
 15 locals got almost \$90-million. If one group chooses to  
 16 file a lawsuit, this money could be in jeopardy  
 17 immediately, and the Wayfair decision, the Supreme Court  
 18 decision did rule that you had to have a streamline way  
 19 of collecting these taxes, which made it -- could make  
 20 it easier on these businesses. So we're certainly going  
 21 to be focused on trying to help our businesses out in  
 22 the State of Louisiana and trying to do the right thing  
 23 with the Streamline Sales Tax Commission. It's a bill  
 24 that I support 100 percent, and I'm going to do  
 25 everything I can to see that across the board.

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1 So with that being said, I will gladly take  
 2 any questions.

3 MS. MITCHELL: Okay. You know, before we  
 4 open up the floor for questions, I do want to say thank  
 5 you both for all of the hard work that you do on behalf  
 6 of all Louisiana citizens, but particularly small  
 7 businesses because you yourselves are small business  
 8 owners. I believe, in listening to you--all provide a  
 9 preview of the legislative session, I heard that there  
 10 will be reform proposals in every tax type, sales tax,  
 11 income tax and property tax, as it pertains to the  
 12 inventory and Industrial Tax Exemption.

13 You talked about trying to help position our  
 14 state to build our business climate, and it's also very  
 15 exciting to hear you mention that you're reaching out to  
 16 stakeholders, small business owners, local government,  
 17 LED, on behalf of the businesses that we work with  
 18 through our tax exemption program, and which, by the  
 19 way, for the benefit of our members here, there are over  
 20 200 exemptions in our state's tax code, and a small  
 21 sliver of that includes economic development incentives.  
 22 And rest assured that LED will work alongside Chairman  
 23 Bishop and Representative DeVillier to make sure that  
 24 our programs are in the best shape that they can be and  
 25 that they are continuing to provide a positive return on

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1 investment to the state. So that's always part of a  
 2 robust discussion on comprehensive tax reform.

3 So with that said, I will turn it over to  
 4 the Chair, who may want to entertain questions from the  
 5 LSBEC members while we have an audience with the Chair  
 6 and a lead member of our Ways and Means Committee, which  
 7 is literally where almost all the action will be  
 8 happening this upcoming legislative session.

9 MR. KRAMPE: Thanks, Mandi.

10 Mr. Bishop, Mr. DeVillier, thank you very  
 11 much for your time and your insight and also the work  
 12 you're doing on tax reform.

13 I remember as a young college student in the  
 14 '80s, I was at the Indiana University and I came across  
 15 a book in the library and it talked about the problems  
 16 with Louisiana's tax laws, and I don't think we've made  
 17 one change to those laws since then. Certainly the  
 18 centralized collection of sales tax would be a great way  
 19 for us to reduce tax burden or at least the unseen tax  
 20 burden on businesses. Also the inventory tax is  
 21 something that is extremely difficult for Louisiana  
 22 small businesses, and I think that would be a great  
 23 thing to change as well, so thank you for what you're  
 24 doing.

25 Does anyone have any questions or thoughts

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1 for our guests?

2 MS. MITCHELL: Yes. Looks like Ms. Garrett  
 3 has a question.

4 MS. GARRETT: Thank you, first off, for  
 5 assisting today and sharing the information and giving  
 6 us some insight. I just -- it's not more of a question,  
 7 but more of just a point of clarification as it relates  
 8 to communication around the efforts for the business  
 9 community. Will there be some type of synopsis or at  
 10 least a formal type of communication that we can share  
 11 with the business community so that they can understand  
 12 how the changes will impact their business and also be  
 13 able to advocate on behalf of either support by reaching  
 14 out to their representatives or when supporting you--all  
 15 with the session and making sure that our voices are  
 16 heard?

17 MS. MITCHELL: Yes. And that's a good  
 18 question. Mr. Chairman Krampe, if you don't mind, I'll  
 19 take the first stab at that.

20 So there are various groups that, advocacy  
 21 groups, private sector advocacy groups that create  
 22 summaries of the legislative session, what's to come,  
 23 and state agencies do the same. And I will say this,  
 24 LED is a state agency, so we are prohibited from any  
 25 sort of advocacy for or against legislation. We do



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1 engage and provide information on legislation if it  
2 would have an impact on any of our programs or on the  
3 business, the business climate as a whole, but I do, at  
4 every year, create a summary of legislation that will  
5 impact the department, and I'd be happy to share that  
6 with the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council,  
7 but I can also direct you to some private sector  
8 resources that also do a deep dive on legislation that  
9 will impact business and what their take and stance on  
10 those instruments are. So I could do that for you, for  
11 this council, as well, point you to those resources.

12 But we are a nonpartisan, publicly-funded  
13 state agency, so what you'll get from LED will be  
14 unfiltered information on what bills are coming and what  
15 we interpret the impact of those bills to be. So, yeah,  
16 we'd be happy to share that with the members of the  
17 LSBEC.

18 MS. GARRETT: Thank you. Thank you.

19 MS. MITCHELL: I think I saw another hand.  
20 Ms. Tucker.

21 MS. TUCKER: How are y'all? Thank you so  
22 much for explaining all of that. Thank you for the  
23 disclaimer on not going any which way or any support,  
24 but I would like to --

25 MS. MITCHELL: And before you go too far,

1 Ms. Tucker, the LSBEC as an entity is also a public  
2 entity, so as an entity, we -- and I can say "we"  
3 because Secretary Pierson and I are members of the  
4 LSBEC. We couldn't take a position, but you-all, as  
5 private business owners, separate from your role at  
6 LSBEC, could take a position for or against. And you  
7 are also welcome to attend legislative hearing and  
8 testify and provide information on the impact to your  
9 business.

10 So, Ms. Tucker, I'm so sorry. Carry on.

11 MS. TUCKER: No. That's okay. Sorry about  
12 that.

13 No. That's great information. I know that  
14 we've had a lot of discussion about tax code and what's  
15 coming up in the next legislative session on GNO, Inc.  
16 I also just wanted to ask a question about how the  
17 chairman and the member foresee this affecting service  
18 companies and companies that operate in a government  
19 sector. You know, I'm a member of ACECL. I know that  
20 they're probably going to be one of those private groups  
21 that makes, you know, a briefing for all of us members,  
22 but can you tell us a little bit about what you foresee  
23 when it comes to that?

24 MR. BISHOP: Phillip, you want to handle  
25 that, or I would gladly do it if you would not like to?

1 MR. DEVILLIER: I mean, I'll take a shot at  
2 it, Chairman Bishop.

3 What I mentioned earlier, you know, when you  
4 think about the .45 and the way we are tied to the  
5 federal income tax deduction, I think if we don't take  
6 the necessary -- I guess the necessary steps today to  
7 start fixing the problem and the antiquated tax system,  
8 like Chairman Bishop used earlier, you know, we're going  
9 to just always have this cycle of individuals like you  
10 and others who do have, I guess, state contracts and  
11 things of that nature that are always going to be at  
12 risk of being cut. And that's certainly something that  
13 when we came up with the vision of something that's fair  
14 and something that's predictable, we feel like if we  
15 take the steps today to fix our system, it's going to  
16 pay dividends down the road, and, of course, the  
17 Streamline Sales Tax Commission is a huge step in the  
18 right direction. There's only one other state that  
19 doesn't have it fully set up, and I think it's Colorado,  
20 and they're quite a bit further in advance than we are.

21 But, I mean, to answer your question, I  
22 just -- I know how frustrating it is as a business owner  
23 to try to plan for things that, you know, that the state  
24 has its hands on, and that's something we're just trying  
25 to do to make it more predictable.

1 And that's my chatelet. Chairman Bishop can  
2 take over from there. Thank you.

3 MR. BISHOP: I think the important thing to  
4 realize is when we talk about streamlining, as well as  
5 these other taxes like streamlining, there is not a ton  
6 of meat and potatoes in it yet, and that's how we got  
7 the locals as well as the police juries and sheriffs on  
8 board because we just want to get it. Instead of me  
9 having my staff work a month on something, because it's  
10 going to be an extremely long bill, we want to get it to  
11 the public, and I think something that's important to  
12 realize is that when it goes to a Constitutional  
13 amendment, the wording on it has to be very simple  
14 because, I'm going to tell you, this whole system is so  
15 archaic and so complex that a lot of times when people  
16 go to vote on Constitutional amendments, that they don't  
17 quite understand it, so they vote note "No." But this  
18 is going to make predictability a lot better for all  
19 businesses going forward in the state.

20 I hope I answered the question.

21 MS. MITCHELL: Yeah. And let me just  
22 piggyback on that. So Ms. Tucker runs an engineering  
23 firm, and I know in addition to the tax reform question  
24 and interest on that impact, she may also be interested  
25 in the capital outlay changes, how that may impact firms



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1 working in the construction space, engineering and  
 2 construction space. So I don't know if you,  
 3 Mr. Chairman, had anything on that.

4 MR. BISHOP: I can say any projects that are  
 5 in the process right now are going to continue to be in  
 6 the process. I am not going to hurt -- listen, I'm in  
 7 the construction business. I'm not going to stop any  
 8 projects that are in the works or that any bills or  
 9 invoices have been sent out on. I will not stop any of  
 10 those projects. This is strictly going forward in the  
 11 future to make sure that we're not spending all of our  
 12 money on -- your tax dollars on redoing the Audubon Zoo,  
 13 redoing the Butterfly House, the aquarium. I just I  
 14 think it's unfair.

15 If you talk to people from north of I10,  
 16 most of them probably haven't been to the Audubon Zoo,  
 17 if ever, but in years, and so there was a lot of money  
 18 New Orleans put in a lot of projects over the last eight  
 19 years. And that is my goal is to make sure that capital  
 20 outlay is spread out amongst the state.

21 You know, it's hard to justify, for me  
 22 personally, it's hard to justify that I'm going spend  
 23 \$138-million for the Audubon Institute, which I think  
 24 was a wonderful deal, I really do, but when I have  
 25 people in North Louisiana, small town communities that

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1 you almost have to shower twice just to try to get the  
 2 dirt off of you because the water system is so bad  
 3 there, and I have traveled the state and I have seen  
 4 that through the years and I feel for those people. St.  
 5 Joe's one that comes to mind when I was Chairman of  
 6 Natural Resources. I spoke with citizens from St. Joe  
 7 repeatedly, and in Baton Rouge, and we have to do  
 8 something to improve the livelihood of the state.

9 Does that mean some people are going to get  
 10 cut? Yes, it does mean that, and that's unfortunate  
 11 about it, but I truly believe taxpayer dollars need to  
 12 be spent frugally and done for the betterment of every  
 13 citizen of Louisiana and just not a small group of them.

14 MS. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
 15 I see a hand -- were you done, Ms. Tucker?  
 16 MS. TUCKER: I just want to say one quick  
 17 thing. I'm going to be very, very quick.

18 I appreciate what you're saying. I  
 19 appreciate your interest, of course, in construction  
 20 projects and things like that. I understand doing for  
 21 the entire state. I understand your concern with pet  
 22 projects or what seem like pet projects, but I also  
 23 understand the water issue as a citizen of New Orleans  
 24 and someone who's gone to the legislature and fought for  
 25 infrastructure dollars, not for a zoo, but for crumbling

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1 pipes under the ground, and especially in an area that  
 2 helps create an economic engine for the rest of the  
 3 state as well, and so I do appreciate your attention to  
 4 that.

5 And my concern also is companies that are  
 6 small like mine competing in those industries, and I  
 7 know this is hard stuff. This is difficult stuff  
 8 competing in those industries and still being viable to  
 9 compete in areas where it's already hard for some  
 10 businesses to get access, and so what that tax code does  
 11 on top of that to prices and to cost estimates into the  
 12 viability of certain things. And, again, I'm not  
 13 talking about fluff. I'm talking about infrastructure,  
 14 pipes, roads, bridges and electricity grids. And so I  
 15 appreciate that information and I look forward to seeing  
 16 you out there and really continuing to pay attention to  
 17 the work that y'all are doing. Thank you for your work.

18 MR. BISHOP: Yes, ma'am. I can assure that  
 19 I have met with the members from Orleans Parish and I  
 20 explained to them and there are pump stations in there,  
 21 there are, you know, antique systems that y'all have in  
 22 Orleans, and I put all of that and I said absolutely  
 23 that can go under capital outlay. I have no problems  
 24 with that.

25 Nothing against the Saints. I'm a big

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1 Saints fan, but when they come to me and say they need  
 2 \$90-million for the Superdome, I have issues with those  
 3 projects. I want to make sure -- and, look, I want to  
 4 make sure that New Orleans gets the protection it needs  
 5 going forward in the future, but I also want their needs  
 6 to be realized that we have to work on infrastructure.

7 Port of Orleans, absolutely everything  
 8 they've asked me for I agreed with 100 percent. Every  
 9 water system I agreed with 100 percent, so -- and I will  
 10 always agree with that. But I just there are certain  
 11 pet projects in that bill that are never going to come  
 12 to fruition, and I can't justify supporting those  
 13 projects, but if it's under construction, I'm okay with  
 14 it. But going forward, I really think we have to focus  
 15 on making Louisiana better for its citizens and  
 16 spreading out the money.

17 MS. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And  
 18 I see a hand from Ms. Courtney Davis.

19 MS. DAVIS: Hey, everyone. Gentlemen, thank  
 20 y'all so much for coming in and spending some time with  
 21 us today, and I know a lot of things that y'all are  
 22 talking about, most of them seem like common sense and I  
 23 appreciate your time and attention to all of these. I  
 24 completely understand what the centralized tax, the  
 25 concerns, you know, that some will have. I have them



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1 myself, but I really just wanted to make a statement on  
 2 the side of a business owner of just the convoluted, you  
 3 know, frustrations of having to file in different  
 4 parishes. And I will say this, that I know for sure,  
 5 you know, because I have small business owner friends  
 6 that may be are just starting out that might be selling  
 7 in different areas who deal a lot in cash, but don't pay  
 8 the taxes because they don't want to try and figure this  
 9 out. And so, you know, I'm just kind of putting that  
 10 out there that I do believe that the state might collect  
 11 actually more taxes by making it easy for people to  
 12 really understand, to know how they're supposed to be  
 13 doing this, you know, instead of having to go into all  
 14 of the different areas.

15 So, you know, I just wanted to make that  
 16 statement right there that I think it actually will be  
 17 better for the state, and I think they'll collect more  
 18 because there are those businesses out there that are  
 19 cash-based that, you know, you don't see all the  
 20 transactions, that do want to do the right thing but  
 21 don't have the money to pay someone to show them how to  
 22 do the right thing. So making it easier is certainly  
 23 going to help those business owners.

24 MR. BISHOP: Well, I appreciate that. And  
 25 the truth is we absolutely have to simplify our tax

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1 system. We cannot be 49th any longer, and meeting with  
 2 the Tax Institute in DC and COST, which is a taxpayer  
 3 organization, a tax organization as well, they're saying  
 4 if we can get even half of this package passed, we are  
 5 going to go from upper 40s to mid 20s, and that would be  
 6 absolutely wonderful for Louisiana not to be last in  
 7 everything any longer.

8 So, look, I assure you we're working hard,  
 9 and PAR is on board with it, a lot of small businesses  
 10 are on board with it. And if y'all ever have any  
 11 questions whatsoever, always feel free to call me  
 12 directly and we can figure out exactly what works best  
 13 for y'all because, like Mandi said, I mean, I'm in the  
 14 concrete business, so I understand that I have to have  
 15 an army of CPAs just in order to figure out how to pay  
 16 my taxes and do it the smart way. So we are trying to  
 17 simplify our tax system for those businesses that you  
 18 talk of.

19 MS. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
 20 MR. DEVILLIER: Mandi, hey, it's  
 21 Representative Phillip DeVillier. I have something I'd  
 22 like to say.  
 23 Ms. Davis, you had mentioned about common  
 24 sense, and I'd agree with you 100 percent.  
 25 One thing also that you had mentioned is the

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1 burden on businesses to actually collect and remit these  
 2 taxes. If y'all know any small business owners like  
 3 yourself or even larger business owners, we would really  
 4 appreciate if y'all would come testify in Ways and Means  
 5 to share your story and let the members know how  
 6 important it is, you know, that we do these policies to  
 7 help not only you guys in business, but to help  
 8 Louisiana become the state it can be.

9 I just wanted to mention that. So please  
 10 consider coming to Chairman Bishop's committee and  
 11 testifying. Those stories are very helpful. Thank you.

12 MS. DAVIS: (Zoom audio interruption) -- I  
 13 don't plan on getting in the middle of it because I want  
 14 to learn it. I always (Zoom audio interruption).

15 MS. MITCHELL: I think we lost you,  
 16 Courtney, but I'll make sure to connect any members of  
 17 the council, if you'd like to connect with our chairman  
 18 and Rep DeVillier, I can make those connections on your  
 19 behalf.

20 I know our legislators, you're short on  
 21 time. The only thing I would ask, if you-all could  
 22 touch upon, would be any concerns, lingering concerns  
 23 you're hearing from stakeholders that have a stake in  
 24 sales tax collections, just to give our members of this  
 25 council full appreciation of how difficult this job is

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1 that you-all have taken head on of trying to centralize  
 2 our sales tax collections and improve the environment  
 3 and increase our rankings, but there are some challenges  
 4 and some are legit concerns from some of the  
 5 stakeholders. So I don't know if y'all want to touch on  
 6 that, and then anything else you'd like to share with  
 7 this group before we have to move on to other agenda  
 8 items and then let you-all get back to your work.

9 MR. BISHOP: Mandi, people don't like  
 10 change, and I have absolutely, as a legislator, come to  
 11 realize that personally I don't like change all that  
 12 much, but this is change that has to happen. I think  
 13 through hard work over the last five months, in all  
 14 honesty, probably the last year, I think that everybody  
 15 has realized that the train is on the tracks, it's  
 16 coming down the tracks, and so we are going to give  
 17 everybody ample, ample opportunity to voice their  
 18 concerns. And being that, like I said, it's just a  
 19 Constitutional amendment, and the meat and potatoes will  
 20 come next session and everybody will -- and everybody at  
 21 all of these meetings, and Phillip can back that up,  
 22 we've let every single person that had concerns about it  
 23 come and speak to the working group and voice their  
 24 concerns and we worked through those concerns.  
 25 And on a side note, I will say this is the



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1 first time -- E.J., you'll like this, or Mr. Chairman.  
 2 This is the first time I've ever done a Zoom call from  
 3 the parking lot at Augusta National Golf Course, so I am  
 4 going to go find my family and go watch some more golf.  
 5 MS. MITCHELL: Thank you so much. Thank you  
 6 both, actually, for carving out some of your personal  
 7 time, but what little personal time you do have before  
 8 the session starts to be with us today.  
 9 Any lingering comments from our two  
 10 legislators that are here before y'all have to drop off?  
 11 Rep DeVillier, anything else you wanted to  
 12 add?  
 13 MR. DEVILLIER: No. I think Chairman Bishop  
 14 hit the nail on the head. You know, we all ran for  
 15 office to make a difference in our state. We all know  
 16 what Louisiana can become, and, you know, the  
 17 centralized streamline bill is the right step. It's  
 18 something that we need to do now, and when you think  
 19 about how complicated Louisiana sales taxes are, this is  
 20 the first step in making the big, big changes that we,  
 21 you know, we all know that we need, and hopefully we can  
 22 come together and all see it come to fruition.  
 23 So I do appreciate what you do, Mandi. I  
 24 say that all the time. Y'all have one of the best LED  
 25 or programs in the country, and I appreciate what you do

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1 and look forward to working with you this session. So  
 2 thank y'all.  
 3 MR. BISHOP: And on streamline, I will add,  
 4 on streamline, if any of you would like to come and give  
 5 testimony, the committee meeting will be on Tuesday the  
 6 13th, next week, at 9 a.m. in Committee Room 5. Love to  
 7 hear any of your concerns or any of your support. So  
 8 please, next Tuesday, 9 a.m., Committee Room 5.  
 9 MS. MITCHELL: All right.  
 10 MR. BISHOP: Thank you, Mandi.  
 11 MS. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman  
 12 Bishop. Thank you, Rep DeVillier. We'll be seeing you  
 13 both very soon.  
 14 MR. BISHOP: Yes, ma'am. Take care.  
 15 MS. MITCHELL: Thank y'all.  
 16 Mr. Chairman Krampe, back over to you. Are  
 17 you able to take over the meeting or would you like me  
 18 to carry on?  
 19 (No response.)  
 20 MS. MITCHELL: Okay. Can y'all hear me  
 21 okay? Okay. Good.  
 22 MR. KRAMPE: Mandi, I'm back, but I think  
 23 you muted me.  
 24 MS. MITCHELL: There you go. Thank you.  
 25 MR. KRAMPE: Okay. I think we have

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1 Secretary Pierson up next with Resilient Louisiana  
 2 Commission and LED update. Secretary.  
 3 SECRETARY PIERSON: Hey, thank you, Mr.  
 4 Chairman. And great job, Mandi, with bringing to this  
 5 very important group of focused volunteers that are  
 6 dedicating their time to improving small business across  
 7 our state to bring such great dialog with the leaders  
 8 that are sort of in the arena right now trying to make  
 9 things better for our state. The tax reform is such a  
 10 tall and challenging effort. There's been lots and lots  
 11 of attempts to do this. Hopefully, if we move towards a  
 12 strategy of one bite at a time, we'll have a way to get  
 13 to some great outcomes.  
 14 Really I think that they say tax reform, and  
 15 I know they're in several different lanes in seeking to  
 16 move things forward with that, but certain in terms of  
 17 what I would recharacterize as maybe tax collection  
 18 modernizations. There's just been so much new  
 19 technology. We understand that the system designed so  
 20 long ago to be effective in 64 parishes, that there's  
 21 just so many new ways to do things that lower costs and  
 22 can improve efficiency. So hats off to Chairman Bishop  
 23 and to Representative DeVillier in their sponsorship and  
 24 their leadership in these activities.  
 25 Really just kind of quickly for you, again,

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1 so much appreciate the time and attention that you carve  
 2 out to small businesses at LED. It's really four key  
 3 sectors for us: Recruitment of new business into the  
 4 state, which is very good for our small businesses;  
 5 attending to our existing industry here because that's  
 6 where we'll grow the most jobs. Everybody from a banker  
 7 to a restaurant owner knows that it's easier to keep  
 8 your current client base happy than it is to try to find  
 9 clients to replace those that get unhappy;  
 10 international; and then, again, just a very robust  
 11 growth in our attention to small businesses over the  
 12 last five and six years. So really pleased with where  
 13 we are, and would want to direct your attention to our  
 14 website, OpportunityLouisiana.com, where you'll see our  
 15 annual report posted. It tells a great story about what  
 16 we've been able to accomplish all through last year with  
 17 your help and with the Resilient Louisiana Commission  
 18 active and engaged in putting together a game plan for a  
 19 more resilient Louisiana. That's also posted there. A  
 20 lot for you to be knowledgeable about and continue to  
 21 see ways that you can promote things and utilize that  
 22 annual report also as a marketing tool.  
 23 RLC is active really right now in the  
 24 engagement of around getting shots in arms, and really  
 25 pleased to say that over 2-million shots have been



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1 administered in the vaccine in Louisiana. And, in fact,  
 2 more than 834,000 people have had both, have completed  
 3 the regimen there. So we're making good progress  
 4 against that, but we don't need to lose that momentum  
 5 that leads us back into a place where the economy fully  
 6 opens, where all our small businesses, all our industry  
 7 flourishes again coming out of this extraordinary and  
 8 very, very challenging set of circumstances around  
 9 public health.

10 So we've taken up a lot of your afternoon  
 11 already. I want to yield some time back to Mandi and  
 12 the group, but please know I'm a very, very strong  
 13 supporter of what you're bringing to the table so that  
 14 we can continue to incorporate this important work. We  
 15 run fiscal year, so 1 July will be the new year for the  
 16 state's budget, but it's also 1 July the new year for  
 17 our business plan in which we operate the department and  
 18 try to strive for continual improvement, which means  
 19 looking at our business plan and seeing what we've  
 20 accomplished, taking out those elements that have been  
 21 achieved and seeing where we can refocus, rededicate or  
 22 better allocate resources. So we're having those  
 23 conversations internally, and we look to groups like  
 24 yours for the kinds of input that will guide and  
 25 continue to guide our program of work through Pat Witty

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1 and his team and Stephanie Hartman, and I see Tatiana on  
 2 the call as well. So a lot of focus here at LED on what  
 3 you do and want to acknowledge how important that you  
 4 are to us.

5 Mandi, that's all I have unless there's  
 6 questions.

7 MS. MITCHELL: Thank you, Secretary Pierson.  
 8 Turn back it over to Chairman Krampe. I  
 9 don't see any hands up, but there may be some questions  
 10 for you.

11 MR. KRAMPE: Thanks a lot, Secretary.  
 12 Does anybody have any questions while we  
 13 have Secretary Pierson here? Questions or thoughts.  
 14 (No response.)

15 MR. KRAMPE: Okay. I don't see any, but  
 16 thank you for the update and thank you for your  
 17 leadership. We appreciate it.

18 Mandi, what do we have next?

19 MS. MITCHELL: We have our roundtable of  
 20 LSBEC members, and just before we do that and while we  
 21 have Secretary Pierson still with us, I just wanted to  
 22 share with the group some exciting news that in the  
 23 American Rescue Plan Act, congress has provided  
 24 \$10-million in funding to the State Small Business  
 25 Credit Initiative. And, as you-all know, one of your

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1 top recommendations in the first report and again in the  
 2 2021 report is that we do something in Louisiana to  
 3 improve access to capital, so we expect to receive some  
 4 of that funding in our state. We are waiting for  
 5 guidance from U.S. Treasury as to how those funds will  
 6 be deployed to the states and when and what kind of  
 7 framework will be provided, but we have some really good  
 8 ideas that we're working on. And I don't know if  
 9 Secretary Pierson wanted to elaborate a little bit  
 10 further on that.

11 SECRETARY PIERSON: Well, I'll just comment  
 12 very quickly, Mandi, and thank you for bringing it up.

13 For this group, this is going to be an  
 14 amazing time, and your voice is going to be amplified  
 15 and so important. This is the State Small Business  
 16 Credit Initiative, and thanks to some great performance  
 17 in the past, we have our fingers crossed, and things  
 18 that I'm putting forward to you today I want you to keep  
 19 in pencil and in confidence, but due to outstanding  
 20 performance in the past with a similar program that came  
 21 about with the collapse of the housing bubble in '09, a  
 22 2010 program was put on the table by congresses, and we  
 23 accelerated, utilized, passed audits and did great work  
 24 in getting Loan Guaranty Program and other funding out.  
 25 So we think that we're going to be marked forward with

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1 SBA's analysis, and the U.S. Treasury is actually  
 2 running this program, so I probably have to say not SBA,  
 3 but the Treasury Department will be doing the allocation  
 4 of this funding. We think that due to our past  
 5 outstanding performance that we'll get a significant  
 6 award, and we think that -- and part of that, anytime  
 7 you take the money from the federal government, they're  
 8 going to say "Okay. How are you going to deploy this  
 9 money?" And in large part we think the answer of the  
 10 same way we did last time with the caveat that if there  
 11 are some new programs that we want to bring to the  
 12 table, that we'll come back and tell you about them and  
 13 get them approved. We'll accelerate speed to market,  
 14 which is of interest to the Treasury, so in a perfect  
 15 world -- and, look, we're in government now, so a  
 16 perfect world part, but we think we're very well  
 17 positioned to bring some great new outcomes to small  
 18 businesses and this whole entrepreneurship environment  
 19 in our state in the very near future.

20 We are going to make application with those  
 21 funds given that the Governor is willing to do so, and  
 22 we strongly believe that he will. And then we'll be  
 23 back to talk to you about how they can be and will be  
 24 deployed in our state.

25 And I'll go back to Mandi.



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1 MS. MITCHELL: Thank you for that.  
 2 Yes. It's exciting, and we will have more  
 3 meat on the bone and more detail to share with you-all  
 4 for our next meeting, but we just thought we'd share  
 5 that since it has been passed as part of the most recent  
 6 pandemic relief fund at the federal level.  
 7 At this time, we would like to open up the  
 8 floor, Mr. Chairman, to a roundtable of members, and I'm  
 9 trying to be mindful of the time, so I don't know if you  
 10 want to take five, 10 minutes and just hear from the  
 11 members of the council on any topics they'd like us to  
 12 be focused on going forward.  
 13 MR. KRAMPE: I absolutely would.  
 14 Does anybody have anything they'd like to  
 15 share with us, thoughts, questions or otherwise?  
 16 MR. SOULÉ: Yes. E.J., Secretary Pierson,  
 17 Mandi, pleasure to be with you. I missed the last  
 18 meeting. The is René, a small business service industry  
 19 in the Florida Parishes, and I just want to point out  
 20 one thing that my company did reaching out to Hudson  
 21 procurement, and I'm not quite sure where we are with  
 22 making sure that the individuals leading that cause,  
 23 that state agency, are really robust and ramped up to  
 24 the various businesses and being responsive. I sent out  
 25 several communications, and one of the things that was

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1 disheartening to me is I never got a reply back from any  
 2 of the contracting offices, not even an acknowledgement  
 3 of receipt. And as a small business, we don't have time  
 4 to birddog. You know, if we don't get a response, then  
 5 we're moving on to the next person who's listening. And  
 6 I understand they're busy too, but if we're really going  
 7 to grow this and be robust, at least acknowledgement of,  
 8 you know, e-mail saying "Thank you for reaching out.  
 9 We'll let you know," something to that effect. But to  
 10 get nothing at all -- and I've done this several times,  
 11 and I've gotten nothing. And I'm just kind of  
 12 surprised.  
 13 MS. MITCHELL: Yes. We will -- I will  
 14 follow up with you directly to see if I can identify  
 15 which agency procurement officers have not been  
 16 responsive because that is contrary to the way that we  
 17 like to see the Hudson Initiative Program and the  
 18 procurement piece, which, as you-all know, we do not  
 19 administer that component at LED, but we have a vested  
 20 interest in that component that Hudson and veteran-owned  
 21 businesses are successful in our state and that they  
 22 have that opportunity to connect with state agencies and  
 23 it starts with that procurement officer at whichever  
 24 respected agency. So we will follow up on that offline,  
 25 but thank you for raising that issue because it is an

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1 issue that it's of importance to this council. You-all  
 2 identified that in the first report and during our  
 3 discussions early on that we'd like to see more  
 4 Louisiana businesses and more disadvantaged Louisiana  
 5 businesses have access to procurement opportunities.  
 6 MR. KRAMPE: Thanks for bringing that up,  
 7 René. Appreciate it. And I think you might have found  
 8 your birddog in Mandi, so we'll see how that goes.  
 9 Anyone else?  
 10 MS. TUCKER: Yeah. I want to jump in here,  
 11 Mr. Chairman, if you don't mind, just very quickly. I  
 12 know everyone has much more business to attend to today.  
 13 Just a couple things. First on  
 14 infrastructure dollars hopefully will be coming down  
 15 from the federal government soon. Prayerfully they can  
 16 actually get something done in DC; right?  
 17 And in order to prepare us for that, I know,  
 18 Mandi, we've talked about the bonding program that LED  
 19 is, you know, plays a big part of and gets out there and  
 20 is very helpful to small businesses. I don't know if  
 21 it's a legislative hurdle or not to be able to try to  
 22 increase the capacity of what that program can let. You  
 23 know, there's a lot of businesses that participated, and  
 24 right now they're absolutely happy to have it. They're  
 25 still, even with that help, not able to compete due to

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1 the large scope requirements that are involved. So I  
 2 don't know what it takes. I can't imagine a better time  
 3 than right now to try to fight to get that increased a  
 4 little bit more to make businesses more viably, more  
 5 viable to compete. And that's just not -- that's not  
 6 just Hudson. That's everybody. That's every small  
 7 business in Louisiana that does construction or that is  
 8 trying to increase the capacity of what they can do.  
 9 Now is the time. I just want to put that out there as  
 10 maybe an initiative for us.  
 11 I know it might be a heavy lift. I know  
 12 it's not easy. It's not something the Governor can just  
 13 walk into like that, but I would like for us to put that  
 14 out as an initiative.  
 15 Second quick thing to what my counterpart  
 16 just said, which is a great point, and I'm glad he  
 17 brought that up, now is the time for these contracting  
 18 officers and these procurement officers to be more  
 19 informative. You know, I've had my own issues with DOTD  
 20 in the past, and I think they've grown leaps and bounds.  
 21 I think that there are certain entities like RPC that  
 22 are taking a big step forward and trying to be proactive  
 23 and talking about the way that panels are judged and  
 24 things and DV programs are run and eligibility  
 25 requirements, and that's a big deal and that's a big



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1 conversation and the state needs to be leading those  
 2 conversations, especially in the climate that we're in  
 3 now that we've been in for a very long time, some of us.  
 4 In that vein, the LAUCP program, I've been a  
 5 part of it in my 12 years in business, I have never ever  
 6 seen not one time every single agency with the LAUCP  
 7 come and have an informational session just in the same  
 8 room. And that includes every facet of infrastructure  
 9 that we deal with and that we're going to deal with, and  
 10 it's very pertinent right now where things are  
 11 crumbling. We're talking about water issues in Baton  
 12 Rouge, we're talking about water issues in New Orleans.  
 13 From the entire state. So I understand what those guys  
 14 are up against and what they're dealing with, and God  
 15 bless them for taking on the fight that they did to try  
 16 to fix this tax code, but we do need to kind of push and  
 17 lean and little bit more on our states agencies that are  
 18 supposed to deliver to Hudson and veteran-owned and  
 19 small businesses as a whole. Now is the time to start  
 20 getting information out there, now is the time to start  
 21 certifying more businesses, now is the time to figure  
 22 out how to take a business of a certain stature and help  
 23 them get to that next level.  
 24 I thank God that we have LED. I don't know  
 25 where we'd be without LED. Honestly. I am proud of my

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1 state and for what we're doing. So that American Rescue  
 2 Plan is really exciting. So any kind of way that we can  
 3 help, we're here.  
 4 MS. MITCHELL: Thank you. I appreciate that  
 5 and. I will tell you, we are so excited about the  
 6 infrastructure plan that's being discussed at the  
 7 congressional level. You know, for our traditional  
 8 infrastructure, roads, bridges, water, but broadband  
 9 too. You know, that's a big issue for us at the state  
 10 level and not just in rural communities, all over the  
 11 state.  
 12 But here's something that I had actually  
 13 committed to doing, and I actually talked to the head of  
 14 DOT's new DBE program. I'm going to have Ms. Rhonda and  
 15 her team, however many of them that may be, as guests  
 16 for a future meeting of this council because I need -- I  
 17 would like for them to hear directly from our members  
 18 because that's what we're about is to discuss issues  
 19 impacting our members statewide, and so I will commit to  
 20 you that before this year is over, we're going to have a  
 21 representative from DOT to come and present to this  
 22 group on their procurement opportunities and efforts and  
 23 how they're improving and ways that they can help make  
 24 sure that small Louisiana businesses are having an  
 25 opportunity to take advantage of those.

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1 And then on the Bonding Assistance Program,  
 2 we will take that under advisement that maybe to look at  
 3 increasing the award for support under that program, and  
 4 we'll get to work looking for resources. We are in a --  
 5 thankfully, because of federal funding support, we're  
 6 not facing down the barrel of a budget deficit this  
 7 coming fiscal year, but the future is -- we will see.  
 8 The future is yet to be determined once the federal  
 9 funds pass through. So it's something you always have  
 10 to balance with the resources we have, but it's  
 11 definitely duly noted, and we will follow up on that.  
 12 Mr. Chairman, I believe Ms. Garrett has a  
 13 hand up.  
 14 MR. KRAMPE: Ms. Garrett -- well, first of  
 15 all, let me say thank you, Iam, for those words and  
 16 insights. You know, very well taken, and I couldn't  
 17 agree more about LED. LED is one of the few things that  
 18 we do well in government in Louisiana, and we appreciate  
 19 what you-all do for us.  
 20 So, Ms. Garrett.  
 21 MS. GARRETT: Yes. Thank you so much.  
 22 Just to kind of piggyback on Ms. Tucker's  
 23 statement as it relates to the bond capacity, I know  
 24 we've been having conversation and some subsequent  
 25 committees about the scope and the work that is awarded

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1 to our businesses, and I don't want to be so heavy on  
 2 construction, but even in opportunities of professional  
 3 services and things of that nature, if there are state  
 4 contract opportunities that are termed over a few years,  
 5 if the portion that may need to be bonded can be broken  
 6 into phases, that would also help for those businesses  
 7 to be able to bond up to that portion and then go into  
 8 the next phase once they've completed that, thus  
 9 relieving themselves so that they're able to get  
 10 additional bonding going into the second phase.  
 11 So I'm just asking that we keep that in  
 12 conversation as a thought process to maybe break down  
 13 some of the projects in phases versus having them be  
 14 awarded for full contracts.  
 15 And then one last statement in regard to the  
 16 funding that's coming down and the dollars that we know  
 17 are coming to our state where infrastructure packages,  
 18 our roads and bridges are things that we know are  
 19 culturally related to our economy and its growing, those  
 20 businesses that have been shuttered and may have gone  
 21 through COVID through the phases and not opened up until  
 22 Phase 3 have been at a significant disadvantage, so I  
 23 don't know if there's a way for us to kind of quantify a  
 24 way to be able to participate in some special type of  
 25 either grant fund or a loan fund. I know that you guys



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1 did a great job with your loan platform program when we  
 2 were doing the Treasurer's program, but these  
 3 businesses, they were shuttered for a significantly  
 4 longer period of time, and now, even with them  
 5 reopening, and I'm thinking more along the lines of  
 6 event centers, people that may have had a small movie  
 7 theater, things of that nature that have been struggling  
 8 to stay afloat, that there may be some type of  
 9 opportunity, either in a transition, in business  
 10 training or a way for them to, you know, have a better  
 11 understanding of some opportunities that they may be  
 12 able to give it to. Just some support that could be  
 13 administered to those organizations as well.  
 14 And that's all I have.  
 15 MS. MITCHELL: Okay. Thank you for that.  
 16 Yeah, we will definitely follow up on. You know,  
 17 pertaining to breaking up into phases, that's something  
 18 that has been presented to the Office of State  
 19 Procurement and to DOT, and I know that's something that  
 20 they are actively looking into because a number of  
 21 legislators have raised that question because sometimes  
 22 it's an issue of not that we didn't want to do business  
 23 with the Louisiana company, but that there was no  
 24 Louisiana company with the capacity to do X, Y, Z. So  
 25 that's something that we can make sure we follow up on.

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1 And then I'll just say, you mentioned venues  
 2 that have been closed, we do know that there's a  
 3 Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Fund in the Federal  
 4 American Rescue Plan Act, and there are other  
 5 opportunities for funding. Still PPP funds are  
 6 available. We are working with third-parties to get the  
 7 word out about funding that is still available to small  
 8 businesses to make sure they're aware, the ones that we  
 9 didn't catch with the Main Street Recovery Grant Program  
 10 or the Louisiana Portfolio Loan Guaranty Program or some  
 11 other program, we are making sure that they are aware of  
 12 what's available.  
 13 I believe I see, Mr. Chairman, a hand from  
 14 Mr. Greenwood.  
 15 MR. KRAMPE: Mr. Greenwood.  
 16 MR. GREENWOOD: Yes, sir. Thank you.  
 17 All right. So, Mandi, you mentioned a  
 18 couple things that I was going to say. Just to let  
 19 everybody know, the PPP Loan Program has been extended  
 20 to March 31st. The numbers of dollars available are  
 21 still there, but it's winding down. We strongly  
 22 recommend that everybody that is interested in the PPP  
 23 to apply. Some lenders are opting out just to work  
 24 through all of their applications they have, but there  
 25 are other lenders, national lenders, non-bank lenders

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1 that are participating in the program that have some  
 2 availability.  
 3 The second thing I wanted to mention is the  
 4 Shuttered Venue Operator Grant, the window opens up in  
 5 the morning on Thursday, April 8th. There is a limited  
 6 amount of money available, so we strongly encourage  
 7 anyone that is interested in applying for that to line  
 8 yourself up and get in there in the first week or so for  
 9 that.  
 10 With that, you want to make sure that if  
 11 your company has not registered, not already registered  
 12 in the SAM's database, you'll need to do that, and if  
 13 you need help with that, you can reach out to one of our  
 14 centers around the state.  
 15 The final thing I want to mention is the  
 16 restaurant grant program through SBA, the rules have not  
 17 been written. We're starting to see a few movements  
 18 toward that, expected within the next probably, you  
 19 know, weeks out, 30 days out. And, again, there are  
 20 rules that are starting to come out on that, as well as  
 21 additional rules that were published, I think on March  
 22 31st on the SBA website regarding the Shuttered Venue  
 23 Operator Grant, and that's also the website that they're  
 24 going to start publishing for restaurants.  
 25 One other item to note, there's a group

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1 that -- I forgot the acronym, but it's called SOAR,  
 2 S-O-A-R, they're operating in the State of Louisiana and  
 3 several southern states, and they have funds available  
 4 for small businesses that have been impacted by the  
 5 pandemic.  
 6 MS. MITCHELL: Thank you, Bryan, for that,  
 7 and --  
 8 MR. GREENWOOD: Get the word out that  
 9 they're available.  
 10 MS. MITCHELL: Yes. I believe I have  
 11 information on SOAR, Bryan, but I'll reach out to you  
 12 afterwards and then push that out to all members.  
 13 Mr. Chairman, I don't see any additional  
 14 hands, and I'm watching the clock. We're at 2:25 and  
 15 just a couple other agenda items.  
 16 MR. KRAMPE: Okay. I think we have Tatiana  
 17 with some information for us next.  
 18 MS. MITCHELL: I thought we did. I don't  
 19 see her. Perhaps she dropped off.  
 20 What Tatiana was going to provide for us is  
 21 just some announcements about upcoming small business  
 22 services events and activities, and what I will do is  
 23 make sure to follow up with this group with some  
 24 information about programming announcements from our  
 25 Small Business Services Team.



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1 MR. KRAMPE: Okay. Thank you very much.  
 2 MS. MITCHELL: Yes, sir.  
 3 MR. KRAMPE: Do we have any other business  
 4 from any of the members?  
 5 MS. MITCHELL: Just that we are going to  
 6 probably meet again in the third quarter, and I have so  
 7 many individuals who are interested in presenting to  
 8 this group, including what I just talked about, the  
 9 representative from DOTD and possibly a rep from Office  
 10 of State Procurement, but in addition to that, we'll  
 11 have one of LED's team members to talk about the state's  
 12 Small Business Credit Initiative.  
 13 And then lastly, there is a -- the CDFI,  
 14 Community Development Financial Institution, that I'd  
 15 like to bring to talk to this group about how they plug  
 16 into access to capital. So there will be a very busy --  
 17 our next meeting will be busy. Hopefully we will be in  
 18 person, but we'll poll you-all, poll the entire group  
 19 for your availability to set a date.  
 20 MR. KRAMPE: Okay. Thank you, Mandi. I  
 21 would love to meet in person. I've about had enough of  
 22 the virtual life myself.  
 23 MS. MITCHELL: Me too.  
 24 MR. KRAMPE: I don't know how everybody else  
 25 feels, but I'm about done with it.

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1 MS. MITCHELL: Yes. I'm tired of the  
 2 Hollywood Squares.  
 3 MR. KRAMPE: Yeah, no doubt.  
 4 There is a section for public comments, but  
 5 I don't see anyone from the public on this call, so I  
 6 think that would --  
 7 MS. MITCHELL: Yes, sir. We just, for  
 8 everyone's benefit, we streamed these meetings live via  
 9 YouTube, and we also have Ms. Christophe set up to  
 10 receive any public comments, and we have not received  
 11 any public comments at this point.  
 12 MR. KRAMPE: Okay. Thank you very much.  
 13 I'm not going to go through the motion process, but  
 14 thank you-all for being here, and I will call this  
 15 meeting adjourned and we will see you very soon. Take  
 16 care.  
 17 MS. MITCHELL: All right. Thanks. Bye,  
 18 everybody. Have a great day, everyone.  
 19 (Meeting concludes at 2:28 p.m.)  
 20  
 21  
 22  
 23  
 24  
 25

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 2  
 3 I, ELICIA H. WOODWORTH, Certified Court  
 4 Reporter in and for the State of Louisiana, as the  
 5 officer before whom this meeting was taken, do hereby  
 6 certify that this meeting was reported by me in the  
 7 stenotype reporting method, was prepared and transcribed  
 8 by me or under my personal direction and supervision,  
 9 and is a true and correct transcript to the best of my  
 10 ability and understanding;  
 11 That the transcript has been prepared in  
 12 compliance with transcript format required by statute or  
 13 by rules of the board, that I have acted in compliance  
 14 with the prohibition on contractual relationships, as  
 15 defined by Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure Article  
 16 1434 and in rules and advisory opinions of the board;  
 17 That I am not related to counsel or to the  
 18 parties herein, nor am I otherwise interested in the  
 19 outcome of this matter.  
 20  
 21 Dated this 26th day of April, 2021.  
 22  
 23  
 24 \_\_\_\_\_  
 25 ELICIA H. WOODWORTH, CCR  
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