

STATE OF LOUISIANA
LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
LOUISIANA BOARD OF INTERNATIONAL COMMERCE MEETING
BEING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2025
AT THE BATON ROUGE AREA CHAMBER
564 LAUREL STREET
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

REPORTED BY: KELLY J. DOMIANO, C.C.R.

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1 APPEARANCES:
2 CHAIRMAN GREGORY RUSOVICH
3 PAIGE CARTER, REPRESENTING SECRETARY SUSAN
4 BONNETT BOURGEOIS
5 BETH BRANCH (ABSENT)
6 ABIGAIL DEPINO
7 KATE MACARTHUR (ABSENT)
8 KEVIN MELTON (ABSENT)
9 DON SANDERS (ABSENT)
10 BRENDA STELLY
11 NICHOLAS COLE, REPRESENTING MICHAEL STRAIN
12 A. JAY HARDMAN
13 DREW HEAPHY (ABSENT)
14 CAPTAIN MICHAEL BOPP, (ABSENT)
15 DOUGLAS BOURGEOIS, (ABSENT)
16 JOE DONAHUE, (ABSENT)
17 ROY QUEZAIRE, ON BEHALF OF PAUL MATTHEWS
18 MANDI MITCHELL, (ABSENT)
19 WYLY GILFOIL, (ABSENT)
20 JASON LANCLOS
21 TOM SPIERS, (ABSENT)
22 NESTOR NAVARRO, (ABSENT)
23 HARRISON CRABTREE
24 JULIA CORMIER
25 MICHAEL HECHT (ABSENT)

1 APPEARANCES CONTINUED:

2 MANDY MOORE

3 CHRIS STELLY

4 SADE JOLLA

5 TAYLOR BOUDREAUX

6 SPEAKERS FROM THE PUBLIC:

7 CHAD RISHER, BLACKSTAR DIVERSIFIED ENTERPRISES

8 HUGH BLACKWELL, BLACKSTAR DIVERSIFIED ENTERPRISES

9 JON RENTHROPE, CAJUN FIRE BREWING COMPANY

10

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24 REPORTED BY: KELLY J. DOMIANO, CCR

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

Good morning. So thank you all very much for attending. We really appreciate you being here today.

Chris, how you doing?

MR. STELLY:

Great. Thank you. How are you?

CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

Good. Good having you. So thank you all. So why don't we go ahead and call the meeting to order and we'll go ahead and ask Mandy this time to go ahead, I see, and do the roll call?

MS. MOORE:

Thank you, Greg.

Ms. Beth Branch?

(No response.)

MS. MOORE:

Brenda Stelly?

MS. STELLY:

Present.

MS. MOORE:

Don Sanders?

(No response.)

1 MS. MOORE:

2 Drew Heapy?

3 (No response.)

4 MS. MOORE:

5 Greg Rusovich?

6 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

7 Here. Present.

8 MS. MOORE:

9 Jay Hardman?

10 MR. HARDMAN:

11 Here.

12 MS. MOORE:

13 Julia Cormier?

14 MS. CORMIER:

15 Here.

16 MS. MOORE:

17 Kate MacArthur?

18 (No response.)

19 MS. MOORE:

20 Kevin Melton?

21 (No response.)

22 MS. MOORE:

23 Mandi Mitchell?

24 (No response.)

25 MS. MOORE:

1 Michael Bopp?

2 (No response.)

3 MS. MOORE:

4 Nestor Navarro?

5 (No response.)

6 MS. MOORE:

7 Nicholas Cole?

8 MR. COLE:

9 Here.

10 MS. MOORE:

11 Paige Carter?

12 MR. CARTER:

13 Here.

14 MS. MOORE:

15 Paul Matthews?

16 MR. QUEZAIRE:

17 Roy Quezaire sitting in for Paul
18 Matthews. Good morning.

19 MS. MOORE:

20 Tom Spiers?

21 (No response.)

22 MS. MOORE:

23 Mr. Wily, I think, isn't coming.

24 MR. HARDMAN:

25 You not going to get rid of him that

1 easy.

2 MS. CARTER:

3 He did, he formerly resigned this week,
4 yeah. I told him he should still come even
5 though he's retired.

6 MR. HARDMAN:

7 It's hard to keep a bad man down.

8 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

9 Yeah, that's right. Right.

10 MR. HARDMAN:

11 Going to miss him.

12 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

13 Okay. Thank you for that roll call,
14 Mandy. And we'll get into this during the
15 meeting, we'll be bolstering up the Board in
16 the coming months. So Paige will talk about
17 that some and I think Chris will as well. So
18 anyway, thank you all. And I know we had some
19 urgent things happen over the last week or
20 two, so we had to postpone this meeting, and I
21 think that also had, you know, some people had
22 some conflicts. So we'll be back soon in full
23 strength.

24 So anyway, I would like to get the
25 approval of the minutes from the last Board

1 meeting. Do we have a motion to approve those
2 minutes?

3 MR. CARTER:

4 Motion to approve.

5 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

6 Second?

7 MR. STELLY:

8 I second.

9 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

10 Second. Any discussion on those minutes?

11 All in favor of approving, say aye.

12 ALL:

13 Aye.

14 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

15 Any opposed?

16 Okay. Minutes approved.

17 Mandy, thank you.

18 MS. MOORE:

19 Uh-huh.

20 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

21 I'll just keep my -- just a few
22 introductory remarks, Chairman remarks, I want
23 to give an update on a few things. Obviously,
24 the Super Bowl, I think we're still glowing
25 some from the Super Bowl success;

1 particularly, not only from the perspective
2 that Louisiana was put, you know, in the
3 spotlight and knocked it out of the park, but
4 also I think that from an economic development
5 perspective, we really drove home the
6 messaging that Susan and Paige and LED have
7 been driving and the Governor has been driving
8 particularly since the election. You know, it
9 was a good opportunity to really tell our
10 story, and I think we have told the story
11 really well.

12 And I had the opportunity to co-chair an
13 event on Saturday with the YPO, Young Presence
14 Organization, and before you all start making
15 jokes, there's also YPO Gold. When you're 50,
16 you go to YPO Gold.

17 MS. CARTER:

18 Your golden years?

19 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

20 Sure. I was saying silver. It really
21 should be Silver YPO. I go to YPO Gold and
22 everyone's hair is silver and not gold in YPO
23 Gold. Anyway, so we had the event on that
24 Saturday that we did with a number of other
25 organizations, the Consular Corp, GNO, Inc.,

1 New Orleans and Company, and several other
2 entities and it was a great event. And we had
3 about 500 business leaders there, a lot of
4 them were from other parts of the country
5 coming in to look at how to invest, whether to
6 invest in Louisiana. There were a series of
7 all types of lunches that week.

8 I know, Paige, you were at it nonstop,
9 you know, just going from individual to
10 individual, company to company, and a lot of
11 international entities as well coming in. So
12 we really had put in a great light, Louisiana.
13 So I think, Congratulations to everyone who
14 was so involved in that. And I think it was
15 one of those knock it out of the park moments
16 for the State. So I think we can all take
17 great pride in that, and there's a lot of
18 followup going on.

19 The LEDP, you know, I represent this
20 Board as an advisory member to the LEDP Board,
21 and we had a meeting this past week, you know,
22 as we are finalizing the strategic plan for
23 the State of Louisiana and the master plan on
24 economic development. And one of the things
25 that I was really pleased in, and of course,

1 was pushing for it and didn't need much of a
2 push, but was the focus on global business and
3 global impact. You know, there -- it was
4 great because there was a slide with four
5 priorities or five priorities, and global
6 impact was front and center in there. So
7 that's just fantastic because it demonstrates
8 the Governor and his team, and the consultants
9 that are doing the plan, and the Board, you
10 know, our Board really reviewed, really
11 recognizes the importance of that global
12 impact piece.

13 So as that starts taking shape, as that
14 plan is finalized, obviously, we'll be
15 presenting it here and that can be a nice
16 integration with us and give us further
17 momentum in terms of support since the master
18 plan would have called for a global impact
19 piece in that master plan.

20 The -- then just a couple of other
21 things, the bolstering of the Board, as I
22 mentioned before, Paige has been working
23 really hard with Chris, who we'll hear from
24 today, both in terms of some legislative. You
25 know, we're getting ready to come into

1 session, so we want to be prepared on the
2 LABIC side for what we can do to refine our
3 focus in that session and our mission, you
4 know, further refine our mission. You have
5 some other Boards now. We want to make sure
6 that everybody is a, you know, a collaborative
7 and also that we each have our focus, but yet
8 we're still cross aligning.

9 So we're working hard on that. And at
10 the same time, we're in the process of
11 bolstering our Board. Previous
12 administrations, you know, several vacancies
13 were left there in our Board. Paige and her
14 team have been doing a great job in terms of
15 analyzing and we've been talking about
16 different individuals to be joining this Board
17 going forward. And we're really excited about
18 some of the nominees we have and possible
19 candidates, which will give us a nice
20 bolstering, a further bolstering of this Board
21 and really have us going full blast for the
22 coming year and years.

23 The final thing I just wanted to comment
24 on is the international office side. Paige is
25 going to talk about that too. And as the

1 session -- as we come out of session, we can
2 get a really good definition and focus on best
3 areas around the world to really put our
4 resources and efforts around and where those
5 resources are coming from and how to best put
6 in those resources. Because we recognize we
7 have to, when we make trips abroad,
8 particularly, we have the local followup, and
9 so we have some individuals on the ground that
10 all really representing just Louisiana, not
11 representing as we've had in the past, a whole
12 slate of different states, and then there's
13 really no loyalty. So I think this has been
14 one of the priorities of Paige and the
15 Secretary when they came in, they just wanted
16 to make sure that we did it diligently and
17 methodically and had representatives that were
18 representing Louisiana and really believed in
19 Louisiana and therefore could market Louisiana
20 better and help us land the deals.

21 So anyway, with that, I will -- it's all
22 I had -- before I move on, is there any
23 questions or classifications anybody's got in
24 those remarks?

25 All right. Thank you all. All right.

1 Then, we will turn it over then to Paige,
2 Paige Carter.

3 MS. CARTER:

4 Thank you, Chairman. Real quick, before
5 I get started, I've got a couple of team
6 members from LED inclusive also of the World
7 Trade Center and Harrison, if y'all would
8 quickly introduce yourselves so that the room
9 knows that you're with the Department. Sade,
10 I'll go ahead and start with you.

11 MS. JOLLA:

12 I'm Sade Jolla, Administrator at LEDBD.

13 MR. BOUDREAUX:

14 I'm Taylor Boudreaux, Director of
15 Business Development at LED.

16 MR. CRABTREE:

17 Harrison Crabtree, Director of the World
18 Trade Center in New Orleans.

19 MS. CARTER:

20 I consider Harrison a part of our team.

21 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

22 Yeah.

23 MS. CARTER:

24 If you haven't picked up on that from the
25 last several meetings, he is a quasi-LED

1 employee.

2 Jason?

3 MR. LANCLOS:

4 Oh, hey. Good morning. Jason Lanclos,
5 Economic Development.

6 MR. STELLY:

7 Chris Stelly, I'm with Economic
8 Development.

9 MS. DEPINO:

10 Abigail DePino, I'm the Director and
11 (inaudible).

12 MS. MOORE:

13 Mandy Moore, Director of Operations for
14 Business Development.

15 MS. CARTER:

16 So, today, we have two board meetings
17 going on at the same time. We have Commerce
18 and Industry Board and then also this one
19 going on. So you will continue to see at
20 these meetings a heavier alignment and
21 integration with the overall business
22 development team at LED, along with other
23 groups within the Department, like Chris
24 Stelly representing Legislative Affairs, at
25 the appropriate time to talk about topics that

1 we feel are important in those particular
2 meetings.

3 So my hope is that you will continue to
4 see more and more from the Department show up
5 to these so that you can develop the rapport.
6 I mean Nicholas and I were talking about a
7 couple of projects in that area. Imagine if
8 the project manager happened to be here, he's
9 actually at the C&I Board meeting, but that is
10 my hope is that that alignment and integration
11 continues to materialize so that we're
12 maximizing every minute we have together.

13 One more thing before I get into my
14 departmental report that I will share, we will
15 have these meetings even when the board
16 members that we currently have decide that
17 they can't come for whatever reason. I feel
18 that it's unbelievably important to remain
19 consistent and that it's important that as
20 we're making changes and we're considering
21 perspectives that we have the opportunity for
22 dialogue, even if it's a reduced number of us.

23 And so Chairman Rusovich and I have
24 probably talked three or four times about,
25 hey, it's my fault we had to move the meeting

1 because I got forced to go on a trip to very
2 cold Detroit last week, but I felt it
3 important that, even though some members
4 weren't going to be able to join us, we have
5 this dialogue because we are up against
6 session.

7 We have been getting feedback from some
8 of you about statutory changes and we're going
9 to talk about those today. And, essentially,
10 this is the last time for us to convene as a
11 group before those changes become part of a
12 Bill. And so it's important to me that even
13 though we have a reduced number, we're still
14 holding the meeting. Those that are
15 interested in going back to review the
16 minutes, which I hope board members are doing
17 so, will have the capability to do so and that
18 it is stated in public record will be
19 discussed today.

20 So we'll also be looking at those board
21 seats that we have, and we'll go in to more
22 detail there, but we've got stated meetings
23 planned. We'll talk about those again at the
24 end of the meeting as well, but we will
25 continue to have these meetings at the

1 scheduled times, even if we have a reduced
2 number of us that are able to attend. I think
3 it is important that we are consistent and
4 it's also statutorily required of us to be
5 meeting consistently every quarter.

6 So I'm going to over five key updates.
7 And Greg actually stole a couple of those that
8 I planned to update the group on today from a
9 departmental standpoint. But first and
10 foremost, I want to take a second to
11 acknowledge our team and the Department and
12 really the entire state for a remarkable win.
13 This year, we actually, for 2024, we received
14 the Business Facilities magazine Deal of the
15 Year Award. It's the first time the State of
16 Louisiana has ever secured this type of
17 recognition for Meta's \$10 billion facility in
18 Richland Parish. That is a huge all of
19 Louisiana win. That is from remarkable
20 partnership at DOTD, remarkable partnership at
21 DENR, and even Entergy Louisiana bringing the
22 league to the State.

23 And so it's a really great display of
24 this integration that we're really at the --
25 that we're anchored on and being able to see a

1 win like that, transformation like that is
2 what happens when we all put Louisiana first,
3 and we all play the role that we can to
4 accomplishing a common goal. So really want
5 to take a second to acknowledge that. That
6 was early December that we announced that
7 project, \$10 billion in Richland Parish. It
8 is the largest capital investment that we have
9 ever had in the State of Louisiana and 500
10 jobs. It's remarkable. It's something we
11 should all celebrate.

12 ALL:

13 Applause.

14 MS. CARTER:

15 Yeah. Item 2 that I had, Strategic Plan
16 Updates. Right now, we are targeting
17 completion of mid-March. We're really
18 excited. We're looking at a refinement in
19 those target sectors. As all of you know, we
20 haven't done an updated strategic plan in over
21 16 years. It's time and it's really exciting.
22 I'm grateful for the partnership with DOTD and
23 Commissioner Cormier. She's actually coming
24 alongside our team and doing multiple deep
25 dives with the consultant on the subsectors,

1 which I'll get into in a little bit, but it's
2 really robust data, especially around the
3 international trade commerce and overall
4 opportunity.

5 And so being able to see a lot of that
6 come to life and see the data and see the
7 quantifiable opportunities in markets of Asia
8 and Japan and that alignment that we're seeing
9 there in Europe, in particular Germany, and
10 then also Australia. Harrison and I got to
11 really peel behind and look behind the curtain
12 in the last week and so did the Chairman at
13 some of the data that McKinsey has come to and
14 this is the last step that's the necessity for
15 us to iron out what is the international
16 strategy for the State of Louisiana.

17 But the good thing is, our hypothesis
18 that we've had from data internally are
19 proving to be aligned, which is exciting. And
20 so we're hopeful that we'll be able to, come
21 March, really have a solid plan for what are
22 in market offices and what are we going after.

23 Harrison or Greg, do either of you want
24 to add anything about some of the
25 international data that we saw over the last

1 week?

2 MR. CRABTREE:

3 Yeah, the one that is really interesting
4 is Australia, just with a lot of FDI coming
5 out of there, especially in the energy and
6 aerospace is interesting.

7 MS. CARTER:

8 Yeah.

9 MR. CRABTREE:

10 And I think I sent this to Jason the
11 other day, but they were in Washington D.C.
12 this week. Their super funds have planned to
13 invest up to a trillion U.S. dollars into the
14 U.S. market by 2032. So a lot of interesting
15 kind of, you know, as we plan our trade
16 mission over there, I always get questioned,
17 why is Louisiana going over to Australia.
18 Well, let me tell you why, so I think that's
19 among those merging markets.

20 MS. CARTER:

21 Yeah. And we'll talk, I'll ask Harrison
22 and Jason to talk about the strategy of an
23 upcoming trip to Australia. But really the
24 strategic plan, I can't overstate my eagerness
25 and excitement there. And in particular, I'm

1 going to go into point number 3 for
2 Departmental updates, that is volume of
3 activity related to business development.
4 Looking at the strategic plan being the driver
5 for where, when, how, and why our team is
6 dedicating it's time. And when I say team,
7 it's all of Louisiana from our regional, our
8 local, our ports, our utilities, what are we
9 going after in partnership with one another
10 and why and seeing the volume of projects that
11 we work become more and more refined in those
12 very targeted sectors, and really taking
13 assets to life and being able to say, we're
14 going to agree that Port Priority funds, for
15 example, are going to go on this project.
16 Here's why, because here's the five-year goal
17 and ambition that we have collectively as a
18 team there.

19 So that leads me into point number 3 with
20 volume of projects. So we do a weekly update
21 for the Governor, you know, really what is our
22 business development operation looking at and
23 exploring and what's the work that we are
24 doing. Right now, we have a remarkable 176
25 active, what we classify internally as AB

1 projects. It's a lot of activity. It is a
2 ton of opportunity and it requires everybody
3 throughout our team Louisiana to be in
4 lockstep with another to pursue those highly
5 viable opportunities for our citizens to come
6 to life. We want to get that final investment
7 decision.

8 It's important that many of us are on the
9 same team working toward that common goal
10 together. Of that 176 projects, that
11 represents more than 30,000 new direct jobs
12 and over a \$104 billion in potential capital
13 investment.

14 So, Jay, you've been doing this a long
15 time with us. Have you ever heard of that
16 type of volume?

17 MR. HARDMAN:

18 No. I was telling Paige the other day if
19 you get someone at LED when the phone rings,
20 pick it up and go, hello, LED, we're busy,
21 call back later.

22 MS. CORMIER:

23 On every level.

24 MS. CARTER:

25 Yeah, on every level.

1 MR. CRABTREE:

2 If you want Jay, you can go to our
3 voicemail.

4 MS. CARTER:

5 Yeah, the voice to Jay.

6 MR. HARDMAN:

7 Just the law of averages, you're going to
8 get some of those.

9 MS. CARTER:

10 We are. And it's -- Taylor is one of our
11 directors on our team and I cannot -- I cannot
12 emphasize the pride that I have as we have
13 built out. Y'all have heard, at one point, we
14 had 16 vacancies in business development. And
15 so when you have two competing messages of
16 we've never been working harder. And then
17 from a local and regional say, we've never had
18 less activity from LED, how can both be equal
19 and both be true at the same time, that's how.

20 And so when you look at, how do you build
21 a team and how do you really equip individuals
22 that, we're fortunate with Taylor coming from
23 an expertise within the Department in small
24 business and entrepreneurship and joining
25 business development. But as we built that

1 out, how are we making sure that individuals
2 are equipped to respond, who across this room,
3 to call and pull in on projects. We are
4 grateful for the partnership that we have in
5 many of you that have answered the phone when
6 project managers have called with a question.

7 I think Julia, at this point, is
8 basically a member of business development at
9 LED. I was telling the Secretary and the
10 Governor yesterday, there is very little
11 daylight between the two of us. And I can't
12 overstate the gratefulness there because it is
13 a necessity to bring these things to life in
14 the way that we owe our citizens to do so.

15 So my fourth update, and you stole a
16 little bit of my thunder, is the Super Bowl.
17 So how many of you were able to participate in
18 any of the events with the Super Bowl?

19 Taylor, yeah. Harrison, yeah. The Governor
20 made a point very early on when I had joined
21 the team that this was going to be Louisiana's
22 Super Bowl; not just New Orleans, this was
23 going to be Louisiana's Super Bowl and what we
24 were going to do is we were going to highlight
25 the opportunity.

1 We were going to highlight the
2 comparative and competitive advantages and
3 that was an unbelievable success. From the
4 videos that played on the wall that Julia was
5 up until probably midnight with me one night
6 editing, to the messaging that happened on the
7 stage every single day, to the attendees that
8 we had in the tent and in the Louisiana Now
9 pavilion, it was remarkable. And the feedback
10 that we have gotten is just -- I'll just say
11 this, I'm hoping that come 2031, we're doing
12 it again. And we're going to do it better,
13 but we are continuing to maintain that
14 momentum and that all of us are represented in
15 a Louisiana Super Bowl yet again.

16 We had the opportunity to host many
17 different companies. We had about 25
18 different executives that we had come in from
19 all over the world. Technology companies like
20 Anduril, which is one of the leading, fastest
21 growing federal contractors right now both in
22 air, space, and sea, Google, Nvidia, and then
23 a handful of energy leaders like Baker Hughes,
24 TerraPower, (indiscernible), Exxon, those are
25 just a few.

1 And so what that represented was really a
2 robust opportunity for us to highlight supply
3 chain opportunities, but then also touch just
4 about every sector you can imagine and be able
5 to do so in a way that said, this is the
6 excitement that the Governor and this
7 administration has around doing business here
8 and also doing it in a way that the world
9 could see that we meant it. And so I'm
10 excited to see every single company that we
11 had had direct next steps.

12 So this is -- Jason and I will be at
13 CERAWeek here soon and a handful of the energy
14 companies. We have Next Step meetings, both
15 energy and technology really. We have Next
16 Step meetings there at CERAWeek. And so
17 really seeing it wasn't, you know, an open
18 invitation. It was a very targeted invitation
19 with direct next steps that will hopefully
20 matriculate into that final investment
21 decision into Louisiana.

22 Jason, do you want to add anything about
23 the different companies we had with us?

24 MR. LANCLOS:

25 Sure. So just, obviously, on the energy

1 side, there are some specific targets related
2 to advance nuclear and also with some
3 specialty manufacturing, but what we're
4 finding, and I think it's clear as day, there
5 were a couple of folks throughout the world
6 that make some very, very complicated products
7 that are only made in certain keys areas that
8 are not being done in the U.S. Obviously,
9 ships and semiconductors are one of them. But
10 when it comes to nuclear, there are parts of
11 that process, this is like an eight-year lead
12 time, of very, very high level manufacturing
13 that occurs in just a couple of key areas.

14 So we're working with some of those
15 companies on certain aspects of that.
16 Obviously, we've got existing expertise on the
17 technical side. But trying to bring in the
18 production side is a huge target for us
19 because we see what I would call an
20 unprecedented growth opportunity in the United
21 States, and we want the Gulf, our ports, and
22 our system that we have set up here to be a
23 key player of when we start to build this out.
24 That's my two cents on that.

25 MS. CARTER:

1 So my sixth and last departmental update
2 before we get into specifics about
3 international is upcoming events and
4 engagements that actually does transition into
5 international activities. So CERAWeek, we
6 will be at -- it will be the first time
7 Louisiana has a really bold presence together.
8 We have a handful of different constituents
9 come together for one Louisiana presence.

10 If you or anybody you know are planning
11 to be there, this is the S&P CERAWeek that is
12 the largest oil and gas energy conference
13 arguably in North America. And we are
14 coordinating a handful of different meetings.
15 Both Secretary Bourgeois and Secretary Gray
16 will be traveling with the team. We've got
17 representatives from all over this State
18 joining us. So if you or anybody you know is
19 coming, please let us know. We will have a
20 Louisiana reception that's offsite. So even
21 if you're not joining in for the actual
22 CERAWeek -- I want to thank the Port of South
23 Louisiana actually has come in as a sponsor to
24 support the activity. And if anybody is
25 joining, please let us know.

1 We also have an upcoming trip to
2 Australia. We have SelectUSA coming up in DC.
3 And then we will have a robust delegation
4 going to the Paris Air Show this summer as
5 well. So I mention all of those to, A, let us
6 know if you're interested in joining; B, let
7 us know if you have any questions. And we'll
8 continue -- we'll have another meeting before
9 just about all of these, SelectUSA and Paris
10 in particular that we'll be able to report out
11 on activity and planned activity and
12 engagements.

13 Jason, Harrison, do either of you want to
14 add anything about those key events and
15 engagements? And Greg as well?

16 MR. CRABTREE:

17 Yeah. So Australia, as I mentioned, you
18 know, we see a lot of interest from that
19 market now. So we're taking a small group
20 over really focusing on future energy hydrogen
21 batteries, critical minerals, things like
22 that. We've hired a consultant to schedule
23 meetings for us. We've gotten a lot of
24 interest from companies and government
25 officials over there, so we'll have about five

1 days of meetings from nine to five. So,
2 Jason, get ready.

3 MR. LANCLOS:

4 Yeah.

5 MS. CARTER:

6 Harrison has no mercy. When you go on a
7 trip with Harrison, just trust that it will be
8 highly productive.

9 MR. CRABTREE:

10 You get an hour break between the last
11 meeting and dinner.

12 MR. STELLY:

13 That's the way to do it.

14 MS. CARTER:

15 Uh-huh, that's the way to do it, yeah,
16 high productivity. Deliverables left and
17 right.

18 MR. HARDMAN:

19 Harrison, out of Australia, the funds for
20 investment, is that -- where is that
21 originating from? Is it employee retirement
22 system? Where does that pool --

23 MR. CRABTREE:

24 So we're looking into that because we
25 just made that announcement Monday evening.

1 Our consultant is specifically looking into
2 that, but I believe it's just a bunch of
3 investment funds that are pooling their money
4 together.

5 MR. HARDMAN:

6 In Australia?

7 MR. CRABTREE:

8 Correct. So right now --

9 MR. HARDMAN:

10 I was just curious.

11 MR. CRABTREE:

12 So 400 million that they're investing in
13 the United States and then --

14 MR. HARDMAN:

15 Okay.

16 MR. CRABTREE:

17 I'm not sure what, if that's public
18 pensions or private.

19 MR. HARDMAN:

20 Yeah, that's okay. I just was interested
21 if you happened to know.

22 MR. CRABTREE:

23 So we're going to try to meet with a few
24 of those investment funds --

25 MR. HARDMAN:

1 Sure. Absolutely.

2 MR. CRABTREE:

3 -- just to find out what those
4 opportunities are.

5 MS. CARTER:

6 Jason, any recent trips that you want to
7 report out on since the last November meeting
8 until now?

9 MR. LANCLOS:

10 Sure. So Japan was a very, what I would
11 call, intense trip as well and that's mainly
12 focusing on the specialty manufacturing side
13 of things. Piping is, I'm sure, folks, I mean
14 we know as better than anyone, that our
15 industrial facilities are growing. They're
16 facing some of the most significant challenges
17 with transportation. We obviously have a huge
18 push to basically do these expansions.

19 We're still doing some specific things on
20 carbon capture that require some very, very
21 high-end chromium piping that's not something
22 that's very common in terms of manufacturing.
23 And the lead times are somewhere in the
24 neighborhood of a year to a year and a half
25 for some of these specialty materials that are

1 very, very expensive. So working with our
2 existing suppliers, we have a couple of
3 companies that are local that are looking at
4 the vending, the threading and then obviously
5 bringing in some of the bigger manufacturers
6 on the back end to try to either increase
7 operations here or potentially bring some of
8 that manufacturing process more to the U.S.

9 Again, there are certain key things that
10 are not made here that we're trying to really
11 push to say, Louisiana can be this, what I
12 would call, the manufacturing epicenters
13 because of our port system and all of the
14 other pieces that we have on the
15 infrastructure side. So very complicated
16 high-end specialty projects and trying to
17 match those with a supply side is basically
18 what this is.

19 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

20 I do want to jump in there for a moment
21 because --

22 MR. LANCLLOS:

23 Yes.

24 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

25 -- you know, this has been part of our

1 strategy with LABIC for sometime now, which is
2 to emphasize the value-added manufacturing
3 piece to the global supply chain here in
4 Louisiana.

5 MR. LANCLOS:

6 Yes.

7 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

8 So you mentioned threading and piping and
9 manufacturing and bringing it here. If we
10 could -- you know, the more we're able to
11 focus on doing that value add here at our
12 ports and here in our manufacturing
13 facilities, the more we're able to then
14 maintain the product here and actually touch
15 and employ people and do the work before it
16 moves forward rather than just have it
17 coming --

18 MS. CARTER:

19 Yes.

20 MR. LANCLOS:

21 Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

23 And it's great to come through the ports,
24 but we would love to be able to receive it and
25 then do additional work.

1 MR. HARDMAN:

2 Absolutely.

3 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

4 So I think that adding -- Paige, I would
5 think in our prioritization of projects, when
6 we can add value, because that would -- if I'm
7 kind of looking at a prioritization of
8 projects and all of a sudden I saw something
9 that said, oh, in addition, we can also do --
10 add value at a manufacturing to the mix,
11 that's a big deal.

12 MS. CARTER:

13 Yes.

14 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

15 So I just wanted to highlight that point.

16 MR. LANCLOS:

17 And, Greg, just, I'll give you an
18 example. So one of the gentleman here that is
19 part of ADIPEC this year is Tommy Rinehart, a
20 gentleman out of Lafayette, they make --
21 Brenda, correct me if I'm wrong, specialty in
22 tongs --

23 MS. STELLY:

24 Tongs.

25 MR. LANCLOS:

1 -- that are used in the oil field.

2 MS. STELLY:

3 Star Power.

4 MR. LANCLOS:

5 These things are massive, a couple of
6 tables long that, you know, that control the
7 piping on the rigs, right, so fascinating,
8 very specialized material. Tommy was supposed
9 to join me on that trip because he wanted to
10 understand, you know, how do we bend it, how
11 do we thread it.

12 MS. CARTER:

13 Yeah.

14 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

15 Yep.

16 MR. LANCLOS:

17 So just getting local companies to make
18 sure that, number one, the integration is
19 there, that if we do bring some type of
20 specialty manufacturing, that all these folks
21 we currently have set up can play a key role
22 in integrating into that part of that
23 manufacturing process.

24 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

25 Yeah.

1 MR. LANCLOS:

2 And I think we're starting -- you've led
3 with something that I think is you're going to
4 hear probably more and more from, I know me
5 and others from LED, it's just our connection
6 and our GDP connection to exports. When we
7 start looking at the impact of materials, 70
8 percent of our petrochemicals and all these
9 different products that we're making, our GDP
10 is directly tied to this in the neighborhood
11 of like a 40, 45 percent of that. And so
12 trying to understand that these trends that
13 we're looking at from export have a direct
14 impact on how we're trying to do things
15 locally.

16 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

17 You know, that's exactly how Houston in
18 the '80s and '90s and early 2000s, that's how
19 Houston had the incredible growth because they
20 took at that time back in the '80s, a lot of
21 the oil and gas companies moved from Louisiana
22 over to Texas. We let it happen. And then
23 what happened is all those suppliers went with
24 them. The pipe coating, the threading,
25 everything went with them.

1 MS. CARTER:

2 Yeah.

3 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

4 And that exact chain that you just went
5 through, then Houston has been dominating.

6 MR. LANCLOS:

7 Right.

8 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

9 If Louisiana could step back into that
10 picture and start being in the oil and gas,
11 fuel supply chain for the global markets,
12 import and exports ideal.

13 MR. LANCLOS:

14 Could not agree more. And Harrison has
15 experienced this and Paige has heard me say
16 this multiple times, my biggest frustration
17 sometimes is going into a meeting, we were on
18 a trade delegation not long ago and the Port
19 of Houston or someone else is coming in and
20 they've either been in there right before us
21 or they're coming in right behind us and
22 basically marketing that they can do more and
23 better.

24 MS. CARTER:

25 Yeah.

1 MR. LANCLOS:

2 And so the point is that at some point
3 we've got to understand where our role is, but
4 we need to keep track of our time and --

5 MS. CARTER:

6 Yeah.

7 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

8 Right.

9 MR. LANCLOS:

10 So that is where we're laser focused on
11 trying to --

12 MS. CARTER:

13 Perfect.

14 MR. LANCLOS:

15 -- (inaudible) supply chain.

16 MS. CARTER:

17 One of the things that your comments
18 sparked for me and, Greg, especially what you
19 were saying about prioritizing projects, one
20 of the things that we are focusing on, and
21 Chris will go into this as one of the
22 legislative priorities around a site
23 development fund. And so one thing we've
24 really been talking about internally is how
25 can we better align and integrate with our

1 public assets like our ports, so that when we
2 are prioritizing a project's location and what
3 we're going after, we're doing so in a way
4 where we can really bring as many resources to
5 bear and be able to creatively put solutions
6 together.

7 So Julia has been a great partner at,
8 okay, well, if we're going to prioritize this
9 or this, where can it go and how can we do it,
10 and how can we make sure that we're pulling in
11 multiple different sources for that solution
12 so that we're putting our best foot forward
13 and doing it in a way that is value-add
14 manufacturing at the right place, at the right
15 location, and then also being able to
16 creatively look at the financing from all the
17 different resources complimenting one another.

18 And then I would add, I mentioned the
19 Parish Air Show. One of the things, and we'll
20 talk about this with LABIC board members and
21 the seats that we have open, if you know of
22 any company that could benefit going with us,
23 we want them with us. So that's something
24 that, traditionally, we have not done, but
25 will become an integration point for us in

1 every trip that we're going on. It's
2 important that our local companies are
3 alongside us, both for them to be able to
4 export and sell their materials across the
5 globe, but also so that they're alongside us
6 recruiting what company is coming in next for
7 that co-location.

8 And that's something that we have been
9 very thoughtful with our nominations and what
10 type of benefit and voice that different
11 companies or different individuals could have
12 sitting around this table when we're planning
13 a trip. Our next trip to Japan, who's going
14 with us and how many feedstock meetings can we
15 go have to go get a co-location next door?

16 How many companies, Brenda, can we go to
17 that you can say, here are the products that
18 we can bring to you to integrate into your
19 business? So if you do know of anybody that
20 would be interested in the Paris Air Show,
21 please let us know as quickly as possible.

22 Any questions before I go from the
23 departmental update into the international
24 update?

25 Brenda, I felt like you were about to say

1 something.

2 MS. STELLY:

3 We actually have a huge distribution
4 network in Japan. That's a huge market for
5 us.

6 MS. CARTER:

7 Yeah.

8 MS. STELLY:

9 And all of our products are in almost
10 every car manufactured in Japan, just a FYI.

11 MS. CARTER:

12 Great. Excellent.

13 MR. LANCLOS:

14 Brenda, I knew this because of the time
15 we spent together.

16 MS. STELLY:

17 I mean which no one knows what we do, you
18 know.

19 MS. CARTER:

20 Yeah.

21 MS. STELLY:

22 But we make an oil treatment that goes
23 into every car in Japan.

24 MS. CARTER:

25 Yeah.

1 MS. STELLY:

2 I just kind of wanted to mention that.

3 MS. CARTER:

4 Yeah. Well, and that's one thing that we
5 have been talking about with the international
6 strategy is, what does an annual trip to Asia
7 look like in a very targeted way? Knowing
8 that we have robust alignment and opportunity
9 specifically in Japan, but also in Korea and
10 Taiwan has actually been a more -- a larger
11 player for us than Korea in the last 20 years,
12 but those three in particular, what do focused
13 annual strategies look like in those markets?
14 So be on the lookout for that over the next
15 couple of months once that strategic plan
16 wraps up.

17 Any other comments from the departmental
18 kind of 60,000-foot view?

19 All right. Well, then I will just keep
20 on going. I'm going to try to get through my
21 parts quickly so we can get to Chris and Julia
22 with so more fun topics. So the LABIC Board,
23 I shared this in our last meeting, a large
24 number of our board members were not
25 reappointed in the last administration. So we

1 have approximately 10 to 12 different members
2 that their service term has actually expired.

3 Right now, we actually only have six
4 members that continue through 2028, and then
5 we were able to get three new members, myself
6 included, Julia, Nicholas appointed that will
7 continue really for the foreseeable future.
8 Ours don't have limits on them. So that leads
9 us to a really unique situation where the most
10 important thing is that our board members are
11 able to continue to serve based on statute
12 until they are replaced.

13 So we have a full board, but we have a
14 full board that is entering into a rotating
15 door of service terms. And so where a
16 position that may have expired in 2022, but is
17 still serving without that reappointment,
18 you're now missing two or three years of a
19 five year term or so. So Chris and I have
20 been in the weeds on this with Boards and
21 Commissions.

22 We also had Wyly Gilfoil, who has retired
23 from the Lake Providence Port Commission that
24 was a board member, so now that's another
25 vacant seat. And we are hoping in the next --

1 we submitted everything. We had 33 really
2 outstanding nominations across the State for
3 the Board, and we're hoping that in
4 partnership with Boards and Commissions, we'll
5 be able to get the Board really revitalized
6 here soon, and then also get some
7 reappointments confirmed as well.

8 That also leads me to the conversation
9 around statutory revisions and looking at the
10 Office of International Commerce and also the
11 LABIC Board. One of the things that we're
12 really focusing on is what are the right
13 revisions, where we're not creating
14 redundancies with the Ports and Waterways
15 Investment Commission and the Board of
16 International Commerce? What are the scopes
17 and the missions of the two boards working
18 really simultaneously and along with one
19 another in the right ways?

20 Some of the edits that we have been
21 working through with Chris and Greg around the
22 statute, and thank you to those that have
23 provided feedback. If you haven't, we're kind
24 of in the last week to provide that feedback,
25 but really being able to remove the term

1 projects, there's a lot of reference in our
2 statute around funding, and that is really for
3 the Investment Commission now. So looking at
4 those different funding opportunities for
5 ports and those projects, that is not the role
6 of LABIC today, and so removing some of that.

7 And then we're also looking --

8 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

9 And, Paige, if I can jump in real quick
10 on that point. Really, even though it was in
11 statute originally, the statute was somewhat
12 broad in terms of the way it described that.

13 MS. CARTER:

14 Yeah.

15 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

16 So we, and Jay has been there since the
17 beginning, I think Brenda has too, and maybe
18 some others at the table, but we never did go
19 through any type of effort where we had the
20 project prioritization up on the Board, and we
21 said, let's pick that one, let's pick that one
22 because of it. So it was a process that we,
23 that LABIC never did engage in. And, frankly,
24 the Board composition was probably not the
25 right composition for that role anyway.

1 So this is really exciting that Chris and
2 Paige are working on sort of refining our
3 mission to what we really are, which is the
4 global outreach and foreign direct investment
5 with global overseeing, global trade.

6 MR. HARDMAN:

7 Greg, I think strategic plan and self
8 guidance and what should be the priorities.

9 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

10 That's right.

11 MS. CARTER:

12 Yeah.

13 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

14 No, I agree with that completely. And
15 even our strategic plan that was done for this
16 Board last year, I think that also
17 complimented the fact and indicated that we're
18 really not doing the project prioritization,
19 nor should we.

20 MS. CARTER:

21 Yeah.

22 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

23 So it's great to have Julia and DOTD and
24 the Ports and Commissions focus more on that
25 so that we can be more about what I think the

1 true intent when Conrad set up this
2 legislation and Jim Tucker set up this
3 legislation was to really have it to be a
4 global arm in the State of Louisiana.

5 MS. CARTER:

6 Yeah. And that's, with the Board's
7 nominees, we're really looking at what is the
8 right composition of multiple different
9 industries represented from across the entire
10 State? So when we see we say we're going to
11 Japan and we're going to have an Asian
12 strategy, that we have multiple perspectives
13 to also say, we're going with you and here's
14 what we want to pursue when we go. And that's
15 really what we're trying to pivot toward.

16 If we're going to Germany why is BASF not
17 with us, one of the largest Germany companies
18 in the U.S.? Why are we not going alongside
19 some of our heaviest economic players and
20 drivers so that we can look at their
21 feedstocks? And who are the businesses in
22 which they're partnering with that we can look
23 at co-location opportunities?

24 So that's where we're really trying to
25 pivot from a strategy standpoint is how can we

1 start having conversations that are very
2 targeted around the international commerce and
3 trade discussion and leave the investments and
4 leave really the infrastructure to the Ports
5 and Waterways Investment Commission?

6 And also, a lot of the Ports have
7 expressed, okay, now I'm having to attend two
8 board or commission meetings in one week.
9 Let's eliminate those redundances where we
10 can. And so we're hoping to revise the Board
11 seats to about 15 or 17 so that we can honor
12 the two scopes as they're outlined and focus
13 on, you know, really building a product --
14 where are the utilities in this conversation?
15 Where -- you know, try to consider that. So
16 if y'all have any additional thoughts, please
17 let us know as quickly as possible, which
18 leads me to passing it over to Chris for the
19 legislative update.

20 MR. STELLY:

21 That was it in a nutshell. I thank you,
22 Paige. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate
23 the opportunity this morning. Just to share
24 with you a little bit of what we've been going
25 through the past 12 months, I think, since

1 we've had regular session last year, a special
2 session in November that has really impacted
3 the way we do business, and more importantly,
4 positioning our State to continue to win and
5 win big. So everything that we're looking at
6 this year as far as the revamp of the Board of
7 International Commerce and Industry are just
8 those impactful things that make things more
9 streamline.

10 Like, we went in last year, worked with
11 Senator Mizell to create, for example, we
12 created the Louisiana Economic Development
13 Partnership that you heard about earlier to
14 guide us and to help us formulate that
15 strategic plan, which places everything we're
16 going to do this year from a government
17 approach to streamlining this particular
18 entity as well to make it more functional.
19 Last year, we were able to just do some
20 important tweaks to how LED is structured.
21 We'll continue that this year in another LED
22 revamp of which this Board will be part of
23 2.0.

24 We were able to work with Senator McMath
25 and Representative Wright on eliminating the

1 Office of Port Development that was in LED,
2 right. It was an unfunded mandate for four or
3 five years. And so streamlining it is a key
4 piece. I'd be remised not to mention all of
5 the great things that happened during the
6 special session in November that will
7 position, again, position Louisiana to win.
8 Getting rid of the corporate franchise tax,
9 which was punitive to companies international
10 and domestic. We have got a lower corporate
11 income tax rate. We've lowered the personal
12 income tax rate. And I've also, for the good
13 of this group, we've got a big election coming
14 up on March 29th where a big piece of that
15 packet will be up for a vote in the
16 constitutional amendment number four.

17 There is five other Bills that go into
18 effect should that constitutional amendment,
19 or should I say when that constitutional
20 amendment passes. I mean the biggest piece of
21 that is making teacher pay raises permanent,
22 right. That \$4,000 stipend will be
23 permanent -- or \$2,000 stipend will be
24 permanent.

25 A key piece of that is the inventory tax

1 coming out of the constitution into State law
2 and giving parishes the option, it is an
3 option to opt out. And those parishes that do
4 end up opting out of the inventory tax is
5 going to be a huge attractive piece to
6 international companies in my opinion. I
7 think it's important that we all get out and
8 vote regardless. This is a key piece of tax
9 reform.

10 And I think there are more good things in
11 that constitutional amendment that will help
12 further the mission of economic development,
13 including taking a lot of things that were
14 baked into the constitution and putting it
15 into statute so that the Legislature has a lot
16 more flexibility. All that to be said is
17 everything that we did last session, last
18 special session is building toward what the
19 two key components of our package this year
20 will be. Paige mentioned them earlier or
21 mentioned one earlier.

22 The site development infrastructure
23 improvement piece, again, determining, working
24 with the Legislature to make sure they
25 understand the importance of Louisiana's

1 ability to invest in site development. That
2 is what probably a hundred percent of site
3 developers has said we need.

4 Back up a little bit, did you know that
5 Louisiana has only invested \$8 million in site
6 development over the past five years?
7 Probably longer. Eight million dollars with
8 one million going to each region of this
9 State. We're looking at a hefty number so
10 that we can do some things that our
11 neighboring states and other states are doing.

12 And then another piece, of course part of
13 the special session was to revamp the entire
14 Tax Code of the State of Louisiana, which
15 included getting rid of a lot of the tools in
16 our toolbox. I think three of our incentive
17 programs survived the special session, which
18 we were good with, we were on board for the
19 plan; because holistically, in recognizing the
20 transformational nature of tax reform and what
21 it has done for the State already and the
22 impact that it has had has been key to our
23 ability to looking at our incentives and
24 creating incentives that are much more
25 responsible, much more flexible, can attract

1 the companies that are operating in the
2 economic development space today through a
3 high wage impact, you know, a high wage
4 program, incentive program so that this
5 program that we're developing and we are on
6 the cusp of being able to roll out the
7 details. So bear with us, we're still doing
8 some minor tweaks.

9 This program is based on not the number
10 of jobs, not the Cap X, but how much a company
11 comes in and pays above the parish average.
12 So what we're looking at is a way to pull up
13 the wages in this State overall and not only
14 provide job opportunities for Louisiana
15 residents, but provide good paying, higher
16 than the parish average jobs and, of course,
17 all the other LED revamp 2.0. We've got some
18 other things that we've got to do and a couple
19 of other tweaks that need to be made on a
20 couple of other programs, but those are really
21 the three biggest pieces of what we're going
22 to do.

23 Also, part of that package will be to do
24 some good things in funding innovative --
25 innovation initiatives as well. So you'll see

1 a lot of those things come from our office.

2 MS. CARTER:

3 Right now, we're planning for the LABIC
4 and Office of International Commerce updates
5 to be wrapped up into the LED 2.0 Revamp Bill
6 specifically. And so there's some unique
7 things that our statute requires. For
8 example, we are responsible for doing a report
9 to the Legislature that is outside of LED's
10 report, and the two need to be integrated.
11 And so we need to have one report.

12 International Commerce should be part of the
13 Office of Business Development and part of
14 LED's report. And so there's just some little
15 things like that that we just need better
16 alignment that we're updating. And that's
17 part of that overall strategy of bringing
18 these updates as part of really that LED 2.0
19 Revamp Bill.

20 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

21 Chris, have you found anything in any of
22 the recommended changes that were submitted to
23 you, did you find any of those problematic in
24 terms of legislative process?

25 MR. STELLY:

1 Nothing to report on just yet, Greg, but
2 we are kind of looking at that. I've engaged
3 with our legal team, Stephanie Lagrange is
4 going to be drafting it for us, but nothing
5 that pops up just yet. So we're still
6 drafting everything and we'll let you guys
7 know, you know, for sure if we see any of
8 those things.

9 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

10 Okay.

11 MR. STELLY:

12 And, again, it's taking a common sense
13 approach like, for example, we went in and I
14 don't want to say reorganized, but looked at
15 the members of LEDC and tried to align the
16 appointees with the current business structure
17 to make sure that we had good input from the
18 business community on that board that really
19 could be stronger partners for LED overall.
20 So we're looking at all of that. And that's,
21 again, that's just something we're starting
22 the drafting piece on and so we'll definitely
23 let you know should we have an issue with it.

24 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

25 I do want to elaborate a bit on, I think,

1 some of us were talking about alignments
2 before the meeting, you know, and how
3 important it was to cross alignment and
4 synergizes. And I've noticed over the decade
5 really, Jay, maybe you have too, that there
6 was a previous tendency to have LABIC and the
7 Office of International Commerce sort of out
8 on its own doing it and then reporting back to
9 everybody, but having our own sort of entity,
10 our own identity, which we still maintain.
11 But I think that the change in this
12 Administration, which I think is very welcome,
13 is that it's sort of this whole of government
14 approach and it integrates the international
15 mindset and the international effort with
16 everything that's being done in LED.

17 MS. CARTER:

18 Yeah.

19 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

20 So instead of having LED and something
21 off here to the side, hey, that's some global
22 entity over there, it's sort of has taken the
23 global entity, kept its integrity, kept its
24 focus, kept its strength and promise, but is
25 sort of the internal spokesman now. And then

1 it gives us the opportunity to educate
2 everyone that's doing business development for
3 the State, because everybody that's doing
4 business development is sort of in these
5 meetings or a part of it and then they know
6 who the go-to guys are to get more
7 information.

8 So it's an interesting, I just want to
9 point out that change, and I think it's a
10 positive change, but it is a rather profound
11 one, I think, that's taken place as well. So
12 I think in your comment where LED will be
13 making one presentation to the Legislature
14 which would entail International Commerce, I
15 think that makes a lot of sense because it is
16 LED and it does then would help to prioritize
17 it within LED.

18 MR. STELLY:

19 Yeah.

20 MS. CARTER:

21 Yeah. Any comments, questions, anything
22 that comes to mind over the next really next
23 couple of days --

24 MR. STELLY:

25 Yeah.

1 MS. CARTER:

2 -- on revisions to the statute? Because
3 we've got this Bill going and we need any
4 final recommendations at this time.

5 All right. Commissioner?

6 MS. CORMIER:

7 Thank you. Well, first, let me just say
8 thank you for including me, Mr. Chairman and
9 Paige. The collaboration between the Office
10 of Multimodal and LED just continues to
11 strengthen. I don't know why it's never been,
12 but we're not going to ask why, we're just
13 going to move forward and try to move at the
14 speed of light like all of us seem to be
15 doing.

16 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

17 Yeah.

18 MS. CORMIER:

19 So, again, thanks for including me in
20 this. I think it's very important. Update on
21 Louisiana Ports and Waterways Investment
22 Commission first, so we have met several times
23 since the inception of the Commission. Last
24 regular session is when it was created. And
25 as you all know, the directive from the Bill

1 was to create a strategic plan for Louisiana
2 Ports, which believe it or not, as far as I am
3 informed, we have never had one, never had one
4 specific strategic plan for ports, which is
5 crazy because what is Louisiana other than
6 ports, right. I mean it's the foundation of
7 what we are.

8 So port priority is really what we've had
9 through the Office of Multimodal for years.
10 It was created in 1989. It served us well.
11 And Jay and Roy, just to be very clear, it's
12 not going away.

13 MR. HARDMAN:

14 Okay.

15 MS. CORMIER:

16 So that directive from the Bill that
17 created the Commission for that strategic plan
18 really is geared more towards the deepwater
19 ports, how to fund them and how to be smart
20 about the growth of those deepwater ports.
21 And a little tidbit about investment as well
22 from the State and then kind of piggybacking
23 on what you said, Chris. Since 1989 when port
24 priority was created, the State has invested
25 under \$1 billion since 1989 in port

1 development infrastructure, since 1989. And
2 in ports, we talk in the billions annually.
3 So, clearly, that is not enough and Texas will
4 continue to kick our butts if we don't step up
5 our game.

6 So that's really the goal. As my office
7 name indicates, the C in OMC is Commerce and
8 we really should make that a focus on our
9 ports. So even though we're inside of DOTD,
10 we're really the only office that has funding.
11 We've got funding for ports, we've got funding
12 for airports, and we've got funding for rail.
13 So we hope for an additional program to come
14 out of this Commission. That's the ultimate
15 goal, something on a large scale for those
16 large scale investments, something that the
17 ports already have projects in their pipeline
18 that they need large scale investment for.

19 The stage that the Commission is in now
20 is prioritizing projects that the ports have
21 submitted. And I just want to say thank you
22 to the ports again for being timely in all of
23 your submissions giving us basically your
24 whole portfolio and being very transparent
25 about it. So we have several working groups.

1 And when I say several, I mean a lot. I
2 just -- and it keeps growing. And those
3 working groups, I can say are going to be
4 somewhat of a jury of peers to score those
5 projects, prioritize those projects, and focus
6 on those deepwater projects.

7 So I'll tell you the list of the working
8 groups just so you can kind of wrap your brain
9 about what the work is. We've got a deep
10 draft working group coastal and inland,
11 funding for deepwater, which speaks to that
12 statutory revision, I think you guys are
13 trying to remove. So we hope to have some
14 sort of plan or proposal that comes out of
15 this working group for funding this. Oil and
16 gas, rural and agriculture, international
17 trade, of course, which would be project
18 priority list that would come out of that as
19 well, which would replace some of the things
20 that you guys are already tasked with that you
21 probably shouldn't be, and then navigation and
22 safety. And the criteria for scoring
23 basically around readiness and the economic
24 impact which is a little different than what
25 port priority is now.

1 Port priority can get a high score based
2 on flat revenue alone. So a port can build a
3 solo parking lot and get a little revenue off
4 of it and it's going to score out of the
5 charts, which it should if we're talking about
6 projects in that box. But, hopefully, this
7 new program will look at things on a much
8 larger scale.

9 So community investment, I think that's
10 another element that we lack in port priority,
11 so we've got to look at that as well and
12 value-added services, just like the Chairman
13 said. What is this going to do for all the
14 pieces and parts that Louisiana has been
15 missing? Because we know we have the best
16 workforce in the world, right, so let's
17 capitalize on our people and the pieces that
18 we can take care of here in Louisiana rather
19 than shipping them off.

20 So those are some of the pieces of
21 criteria that those groups are going to judge
22 and score the projects based on. So we're
23 hoping that potentially in April, which is our
24 next Louisiana Ports and Waterways Investment
25 Commission meeting, we will have something

1 substantial in the way of a priority list for
2 that Commission to actually vote on, approve,
3 and move forward with. There's going to be
4 more refinement to that list. It's going to
5 be very raw. We're going to need LED to go
6 through some of these and look at it through
7 your lens, of course.

8 There will be a consultant at some point
9 that's going to have to be engaged to really
10 formalize and, I guess, professionalize
11 whatever this plan is going to look like.
12 It's still very new. And in my opinion, it's
13 very infant, but I think we've made a lot of
14 progress in a year. And it has a lot to do
15 with the collaboration here and just all of
16 the partners being ready to be on board.

17 So, again, just happy to be
18 collaborating. The collaboration not only
19 between my office and DOTD and LED, but DOTD
20 as a whole is just more engaged than ever. I
21 know it's a big bear to tackle. I don't envy
22 Secretary Donahue, but I think we're making a
23 lot of progress.

24 We made a change to my office as well
25 that might be notable to you guys. I've been

1 collaborating with LODA and LOOP more than
2 ever, and they're actually inside of the
3 Office of Multimodal now per the org chart.
4 So things that just didn't make sense before,
5 LODA and LOOP Offshore Permitting and
6 Pipelines were in Planning at DOTD; it didn't
7 make a whole lot of sense. So we've got them
8 engaged with us now and they're part of our
9 just regular every day to day conversations.

10 So any questions, I'm here for it.

11 MS. CARTER:

12 You can see why the desire to remove the
13 projects and funding pieces that falls under
14 the Office of International Commerce statute
15 is better suited under the Ports and Waterways
16 Commission, the focus, the expertise.

17 MR. HARDMAN:

18 It never was a good fit.

19 MS. CARTER:

20 What was that?

21 MR. HARDMAN:

22 I was telling Greg, it never was a good
23 fit with us.

24 MS. CARTER:

25 It wasn't, and so it allows us --

1 MR. HARDMAN:

2 At least it was a start.

3 MS. CORMIER:

4 Absolutely. But we can't ask why it was
5 the way it was, like I said, and we can't
6 blame. But if we find a smarter way, let's do
7 it.

8 MR. HARDMAN:

9 Evolutionary process.

10 MS. CARTER:

11 It's evolution, yeah. So it's not
12 working, let's pivot, and that's exactly --

13 MS. CORMIER:

14 Yeah.

15 MS. CARTER:

16 And the momentum that we've been able to
17 have on the Ports and Waterways Investment
18 Commission has been remarkable.

19 MS. CORMIER:

20 Yeah.

21 MS. CARTER:

22 At LED, we have a member of our Business
23 Development and Business Intelligence team
24 integrated into all of the working groups.

25 MS. CORMIER:

1 Yeah.

2 MS. CARTER:

3 And it's been great. Jason serves on one
4 or two, I'm not sure how many.

5 MR. LANCLOS:

6 Funding.

7 MS. CARTER:

8 Funding, okay.

9 MS. CORMIER:

10 The most important one.

11 MR. LANCLOS:

12 The important one.

13 MS. CORMIER:

14 And, look, we've also got members of our
15 legislature on that funding group, which is
16 very important. Those are key, because if
17 they think it's their idea, you know, they're
18 more apt to hold that baton.

19 MS. CARTER:

20 Yeah.

21 MS. CORMIER:

22 No, but --

23 MS. CARTER:

24 So it really is a great segue into the
25 work that we're doing there, and then also the

1 why behind some of the changes and shifts that
2 we're making, and then also realizing the time
3 spent in the two different rolls and
4 capacities and really being able to
5 prioritize, especially for our ports that are
6 serving on two commissions and boards and
7 whatnot, let's figure out the right placement
8 and make sure that we do have the integration
9 back and forth, but being able to refine those
10 and eliminate redundancies where we can.

11 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

12 I want to just capture this moment for a
13 minute. You know, sometimes I feel, maybe you
14 feel the same way, on too many issues, we
15 become sort of the resident historians, right,
16 been around too long.

17 MR. HARDMAN:

18 That is scary.

19 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

20 But I do have to say that the interesting
21 thing is we've watched over the years where
22 this whole issue of the project prioritization
23 for ports was really just sort of swept under
24 the rug, right, well, let's go fight over the
25 port prioritization money, the smaller amounts

1 of money and let's battle among ports and
2 stuff like that for a small amount. And I
3 think you framed it really well, one billion
4 since 1989, that is a powerful stat.

5 And I think it's really refreshing to see
6 that these changes that are now being done to
7 improve and ameliorate the whole process, and
8 instead of brushing it under the rug and
9 saying, well, LABIC doesn't really -- LABIC
10 really shouldn't do that, let's just forward
11 and let's have the next meeting and the next
12 meeting and then have the ports be fighting
13 over a small number of, you know, port
14 prioritization, instead to back up and say,
15 we're going to do this in a much bigger,
16 bolder way --

17 MS. CARTER:

18 Yeah.

19 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

20 -- and we have committees that look at
21 this. We realize that the funding is not
22 adequate. We're going to approach this in a
23 much more diligent, sophisticated manner, I
24 think that's really refreshing for the State
25 of Louisiana that it's being done. And many

1 of us has watched this languish over the
2 years, I think it's really nice to see. I
3 think we'll see where the process ends up.
4 But, boy, it's really refreshing to see that
5 we're coming in here and then recognizing that
6 we have got to fund the ports, the ports need
7 more impetus, they need more funding, they
8 need more muscle from the State. And that at
9 the same time, the international side needs
10 more muscle from the State.

11 We're bolstering our board. We're
12 building up our, you know, outreach. And it's
13 just a nice combination and it's refreshing to
14 see. So thank you very much for those
15 comments.

16 MS. CORMIER:

17 Thank you. Team effort.

18 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

19 Yeah.

20 MS. CORMIER:

21 I will add, I have infiltrated Texas.

22 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

23 Yeah.

24 MS. CORMIER:

25 I've become quite close friends with my

1 counterpart in Texas, who is just an open
2 book.

3 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

4 Okay.

5 MS. CORMIER:

6 And I don't think she knows what's
7 coming, but she has shared a lot of
8 information with me. I'll be making a visit
9 to Austin to visit with her and get some more
10 inside information. I was met with open arms,
11 which may be, again -- well, I just --
12 unassuming, I don't know. She just opened
13 those doors wide open for me. So I hope to
14 come back with some really good information.

15 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

16 Good.

17 MS. CORMIER:

18 Because, again, we maybe don't need to
19 re-create the wheel.

20 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

21 Yeah, right.

22 MS. CORMIER:

23 We can share some trade secrets from
24 Texas.

25 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

1 That's right. Good stuff.

2 MS. CORMIER:

3 But thank you for your comment.

4 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

5 Great. Thank you.

6 MS. CARTER:

7 And thank you for your service here with
8 us.

9 MR. HARDMAN:

10 Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

12 Yeah, thank you.

13 MR. HARDMAN:

14 We've got the Morrison -- Harrison, you
15 want to just give just a brief little update
16 on the Morrison, where we are on that, if you
17 so choose.

18 MR. CRABTREE:

19 Yeah. No, absolutely. So I can't
20 remember if I've mentioned this at previous
21 meetings, but all five of the deep draft from
22 Baton Rouge down to Plaquemines have joined
23 forces with the World Trade Center to really
24 do a comprehensive analysis of the lower
25 Mississippi River, so looking at all aspects

1 of cargo, so great bulk haul, liquid,
2 container. What are those commodities that we
3 are not capturing that we need to be
4 capturing? What are those economic
5 development opportunities, whether it be in
6 energy, agriculture, opportunities in North
7 Louisiana to really grow the lower Mississippi
8 River?

9 So we've been working with a consultant,
10 John Martin, who I'm sure a lot of you have
11 heard of. He's kind of a top maritime
12 consultant in the country, and he's done all
13 the major ports he's done economic impact
14 studies for. So that report, we're going to
15 be -- it's pretty much done, but we're going
16 to be publicly releasing it at the Powell
17 annual conference March 25th or 26th, I can't
18 remember which date for that week of March. I
19 think there's a lot of really useful
20 information in there, a lot of good action
21 items for our maritime community and our
22 economic development partners as well.

23 For us, it gives us an opportunity, and
24 I'm sure for LED as well, when we're traveling
25 internationally to look at this report and

1 say, okay, this report is identifying this
2 value-added sector that we need to be going
3 after or this commodity that we need to be
4 going after. So in my knowledge, a report
5 like this has never been done.

6 Jay, you may --

7 MR. HARDMAN:

8 I've never.

9 MR. CRABTREE:

10 But nobody has been able to find a joint
11 report.

12 MR. HARDMAN:

13 I haven't been here as long as Greg.
14 Now, he might know.

15 MR. CRABTREE:

16 So it's a really good report and, again,
17 looks at all aspects. And it also, what I
18 think is important, it looks at what are our
19 weaknesses. So what is Houston and Mobile
20 doing really well and some of these other city
21 ports that we are not doing that we need to go
22 after or that we can do to improve? So I
23 think it's not just a marching orders forward,
24 but it's looking at what we need to do as a
25 region or as a state to improve.

1 MS. CARTER:

2 Yes. Thank you.

3 MR. CRABTREE:

4 It's a very long report, 156 pages.

5 MR. HARDMAN:

6 We're looking forward to that.

7 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

8 Great.

9 MR. HARDMAN:

10 And good to work on it.

11 MS. CORMIER:

12 John Martin is quite thorough.

13 MR. CRABTREE:

14 Yes.

15 MS. CORMIER:

16 He's the right man for the job.

17 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

18 Oh, yeah. He's -- well, that's again,
19 great example. Thanks for pointing that out.
20 Great example of collaboration again and steps
21 in the right direction.

22 MS. CARTER:

23 Yes. And it's great -- any other
24 comments about Ports and Waterways Investment
25 Commission? Questions or anything?

1 MS. CORMIER:

2 I will say, we plan on the Commission to
3 utilize that report as part of what we hand
4 over to a consultant. So not only the
5 priority list that comes from the Commission
6 and the jury of peers, the Legislative
7 Auditor's report from 2024 on ports, which is
8 all self-reported information from the ports,
9 so it should be good data. And there are a
10 few other things that exist kind of like that,
11 not that magnitude, of course, but we're going
12 to collaborate as much data as we can to hand
13 over. So it's not just, you know, the
14 Commission deciding, right.

15 MR. HARDMAN:

16 Yeah. So you can call that supporting
17 documentation --

18 MS. CORMIER:

19 Yeah. Yeah.

20 MR. HARDMAN:

21 -- to which direction you should be
22 trying to move in.

23 MS. CORMIER:

24 Yeah.

25 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

1 Well, Julia, you may also want to look at
2 or provide to them the LABIC master plan that
3 was done last year, but I think that this
4 Board approved that plan and spent a lot of
5 time on it.

6 MS. CORMIER:

7 Okay.

8 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

9 And I don't think there've been any
10 objections from the new Administration to that
11 plan. I think they looked it over and agreed.

12 MS. CARTER:

13 Yeah.

14 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

15 It's a much more macro plan that says --

16 MR. HARDMAN:

17 Broader scope.

18 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

19 More broader scope.

20 MR. HARDMAN:

21 But, you know, it dovetails into Martin's
22 report as well.

23 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

24 It does.

25 MS. CARTER:

1 Well --

2 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

3 And it's -- you know, you can get it from
4 LED, but it's -- I don't travel around with
5 it.

6 MS. CORMIER:

7 Yeah.

8 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

9 But it's a nice -- and we spent a lot of
10 time on sort of --

11 MR. HARDMAN:

12 Focusing on it.

13 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

14 It was done and not as comprehensive, but
15 it's a broad positive stroke.

16 MS. CORMIER:

17 Sure.

18 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

19 And I think it would help in terms of
20 weaving in the international side into that
21 also.

22 MS. CORMIER:

23 Yeah. And really, and like I said, the
24 focus being on the deepwater ports, I mean
25 that's the major, large scale --

1 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

2 Yeah.

3 MS. CORMIER:

4 -- large dollar investment that we need
5 to focus on.

6 MS. CARTER:

7 Uh-huh.

8 MS. CORMIER:

9 So even if it includes marketing efforts
10 or --

11 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

12 It does.

13 MS. CORMIER:

14 -- such as that, I think that's going to
15 come in the second phase, but it needs to be
16 talked about now.

17 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

18 Great.

19 MS. CORMIER:

20 Because it's something that we'd love to
21 get started on immediately, but we really need
22 to grasp what we physically need first.

23 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

24 Well, can we make sure we get that to
25 her?

1 MR. CARTER:

2 Yes.

3 MS. CORMIER:

4 Awesome. Thank you.

5 MS. CARTER:

6 Okay. So the next update that I have is
7 around the international offices. So, again,
8 I talked about the upcoming strategic plan
9 that we should have published mid-March. What
10 I anticipate coming out of that is a focus on
11 seven particular sectors, and so I'm going to
12 share those with you. They could potentially
13 change, but we what we anticipate those seven
14 focus target sectors being agribusiness,
15 defense and aerospace, energy, life sciences,
16 logistics in warehousing, professional
17 services, and technology.

18 And so what we will do Harrison, Greg, us
19 as a full team here is really look at the
20 robust international trade and commerce data
21 that we have been able to get from McKinsey,
22 as they've gone through the strategic plan and
23 say, which sectors are we going to focus on
24 from an FDI and a trade perspective, and then
25 where are we going to hyper focus that

1 in-market representation. And in certain
2 areas, does it possibly look different, say
3 Australia, which is a very large country to
4 cover, than maybe in Europe where we can have
5 one dedicated person that's able to move a bit
6 quicker and be a bit more nimble. And then,
7 what does Asia look like when Japan and Korea
8 don't necessarily like having one
9 representative for both countries?

10 So we'll start to explore those really
11 with the why behind it being driven by sector
12 alignment and then, of course, the
13 international opportunity in those key target
14 areas. So, hopefully, within the next, I'd
15 say month and a half, we will have really
16 great progress. So be on the lookout for some
17 communications there.

18 Harrison, do you want to add anything or
19 Greg?

20 MR. CRABTREE:

21 No.

22 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

23 No, I think you covered it.

24 MS. CARTER:

25 Okay. Okay. And then the last thing I

1 had today was just planned meetings. And so
2 we have those committed to for the remainder
3 of the year, May 21st, August 20th, and
4 November 19th. And I, again, acknowledge and
5 apologize that last week's reschedule was
6 forced upon me and, therefore, forced upon all
7 of you, and I'm going to do everything I can
8 to make sure that that doesn't happen and that
9 we stick with those dates that we agreed upon
10 in our last meeting. So, again, May 21st,
11 August 20th, and November 19th is what we're
12 looking at for upcoming meetings.

13 All right. Well, then Chairman, I'm
14 going to turn it over to you.

15 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

16 Great. Any public comments?

17 Yes, sir?

18 MR. RENTHROPE:

19 Good morning, everyone. My name is Jon
20 Renthrope. I own a company called Cajun Fire
21 Brewing Company, a manufacturing company. I
22 just want to give my roses to the team at LED.
23 I see a lot of familiar email exchanges. I'm
24 going to be participating in the largest food
25 and beverage expo in Asia called Food Expo

1 next week right after Mardi Gras.

2 MS. CARTER:

3 You've got a busy couple of weeks ahead
4 of you.

5 MR. RENTHROPE:

6 Yes, ma'am. We attract the interest of a
7 rather large retail chain called A&I in Japan.
8 It's the equivalent to Publix.

9 MS. CARTER:

10 Yeah.

11 MR. RENTHROPE:

12 And we introduced unknowingly a product
13 to the Asian market, honey ale, that they
14 hadn't been familiar with.

15 MS. CARTER:

16 Uh-huh.

17 MR. RENTHROPE:

18 It's our flagship, so we're going up
19 there. I've invested quite heavily into the
20 14 acre commercial development, and we're
21 streamlining and creating food and beverage
22 entities on that property in New Orleans East
23 and we're also attracting (inaudible)
24 conference to New Orleans. So anyone that
25 feels that they can assist me, please assist

1 me in that.

2 MS. CARTER:

3 Have you been engaged with India Bellard
4 on our team who manages our State Trade and
5 Export Program, STEP?

6 MR. RENTHROPE:

7 I have.

8 MS. CARTER:

9 Okay. Excellent.

10 MR. RENTHROPE:

11 State Trade and Export Program has been
12 very key to us --

13 MS. CARTER:

14 Yes.

15 MR. RENTHROPE:

16 -- getting access to getting resources to
17 the office.

18 MS. CARTER:

19 Excellent.

20 MR. RENTHROPE:

21 I wanted to thank you all for that.

22 MS. CARTER:

23 Okay. Perfect. Thank you. I just
24 wanted to make sure that you had that
25 resource.

1 MS. CORMIER:

2 I'd love to know more about how you
3 unknowingly introduced a product to them.
4 Social media, was it social media?

5 MR. RENTHROPE:

6 It's our flagship. So we went out there
7 and we were selling it and they was like,
8 honey and beer, and it just kept escalating.
9 We got translators.

10 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

11 Wow.

12 MR. RENTHROPE:

13 Yeah, we made a pretty impressible
14 impact.

15 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

16 What a great story.

17 MS. CARTER:

18 That is. thank you for coming today and
19 sharing that.

20 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

21 Thank you.

22 MR. RENTHROPE:

23 Thank y'all.

24 MS. CARTER:

25 We're thrilled to hear those success

1 stories.

2 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

3 I do want to tell you again and
4 emphasize, Paige and her team are just
5 incredible at any help you need with that, any
6 resources you need, any sort of guidance, or
7 anything like that you need. And in the
8 future, we'll have an office out there. So,
9 you know, you can then have that office and
10 intertwine. That is exactly why we want to
11 have an office in Japan. That's one of our
12 target countries.

13 So in the next six months or so, we'll
14 have the longest, we'll have an actual
15 representative that you can also be
16 communicating with.

17 MR. RENTHROPE:

18 I'll take you up on that. I'll be
19 (inaudible) in six months.

20 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

21 Thank you very much.

22 MS. CARTER:

23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

25 Any other comments?

1 MR. COLE:

2 I just want to --

3 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

4 With respect to the Board -- yeah, I want
5 to come back to you, Nicholas. Yeah, you
6 always close with some --

7 MR. COLE:

8 No, again, I just wanted to actually take
9 a quick opportunity to thank Paige and her
10 team for coming out in December for our LAFA
11 Board meeting.

12 MS. CARTER:

13 Uh-huh. Yes.

14 MR. COLE:

15 And we had a great day introducing her
16 team as well as a lot of local officials to
17 our Lacassine Industrial Park out there and
18 just the opportunity to showcase some of the
19 benefits that we had. The last Cuba trip was
20 very productive for our rice farmers and stuff
21 as they continue to increase the deals and the
22 opportunities and stuff for their market out
23 there as well.

24 MS. CARTER:

25 What was it? Sixty percent of the

1 nation's grain coming through our port, so
2 unbelievably important.

3 MS. CORMIER:

4 Absolutely.

5 MS. CARTER:

6 Okay.

7 MR. BLACKWELL:

8 And I'm Hugh Blackwell with Blackstar
9 Diversified. This is Chad Richer with
10 Blackstar. We're a recipient of the STEP
11 grant --

12 MS. CARTER:

13 Excellent.

14 MR. BLACKWELL:

15 -- to work in Guyana. We were on a
16 missions trip a couple of years ago and we are
17 steadily developing. And I want to thank you
18 guys for supporting that and providing us with
19 those resources.

20 MS. CARTER:

21 Absolutely.

22 MR. BLACKWELL:

23 And I think, Brenda, if I'm not mistaken,
24 you were on the trip with us.

25 MS. STELLY:

1 I was on the trip too, yeah.

2 MR. BLACKWELL:

3 Awesome.

4 MS. STELLY:

5 Actually, the oil and gas show was last
6 week and one of my employees went to it in
7 Guyana.

8 MR. BLACKWELL:

9 The energy conference.

10 MS. STELLY:

11 Right. Exactly.

12 MR. BLACKWELL:

13 And we've been asking for some additional
14 resources to that endeavor. So that STEP
15 grant has aided us in, you know, increasing
16 our capacity, adding some additional folks.
17 And we are putting a larger focus on getting
18 our products over there this year, so...

19 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

20 What is the business model? What is it
21 called?

22 MR. BLACKWELL:

23 So we distribute power distribution
24 products, transformers, switch gears, mobile
25 controls as well as traffic safety and control

1 equipment.

2 MS. CARTER:

3 Uh-huh, value add, yeah.

4 MR. BLACKWELL:

5 We do a lot of work in the state with
6 DOTD direct selling a significant amount of
7 products, traffic controls.

8 MR. RISHER:

9 Mass arm poles.

10 MR. BLACKWELL:

11 Mass arm poles.

12 MR. RICHARD:

13 Signal interchanges.

14 MS. CORMIER:

15 Tell me the name of the company again.

16 MR. RICHARD:

17 Blackstar Diversified.

18 MS. CORMIER:

19 Blackstar. Very good.

20 MR. BLACKWELL:

21 So thank you guys for that and we're
22 looking to grow in overseas international.

23 MS. STELLY:

24 Guyana is an incredible market. I mean
25 getting in at the right time.

1 MS. CARTER:

2 Yeah, it is.

3 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

4 Yeah, on the energy sector in particular,
5 it's --

6 MS. STELLY:

7 A lot of opportunities.

8 MS. CARTER:

9 See, this is the value that we need to be
10 seeing both in board members and the public
11 coming to these meetings. So I can't -- to my
12 knowledge, have we had STEP recipients outside
13 of board members come?

14 MS. STELLY:

15 What is that?

16 MS. CARTER:

17 The public, I mean I can't thank y'all
18 enough for being here today.

19 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

20 Right.

21 MS. STELLY:

22 I feel like this is such a great learning
23 opportunity.

24 MS. CARTER:

25 Yeah.

1 MS. STELLY:

2 I mean I've taken, like, 22 pages of
3 notes. It's fascinating. All that you all
4 are doing, it's incredible.

5 MS. CARTER:

6 Well, thank you. And thank you all for
7 coming. I would ask, as many of these that
8 you can be present at, as we're thinking
9 through these, it's important that your voices
10 be heard and thank y'all for coming. I've
11 never heard...

12 MS. STELLY:

13 I hate missing a meeting.

14 MS. CARTER:

15 Well, we're not going to miss meetings.

16 MS. STELLY:

17 Yes. I don't think I've ever missed a
18 meeting.

19 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

20 And I think with the State and buildup,
21 it's a public and private partnership effort.
22 So, again, anything the State can do, I know
23 that we're all in for you.

24 MS. CARTER:

25 Yes. Absolutely.

1 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

2 I mean this is exactly what we're trying
3 to build more of a business to government
4 approach and sort of having that weave into
5 one. So thank you all and good luck with your
6 businesses.

7 MR. HARDMAN:

8 No doubt.

9 MS. CARTER:

10 Yeah.

11 CHAIRMAN RUSOVICH:

12 Okay. Any other comments?

13 Motion to adjourn? Great. So moved.

14 MS. CARTER:

15 Thank you, Chairman.

16 (WHEREUPON, THE MEETING ADJOURNED.)
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1 R E P O R T E R ' S C E R T I F I C A T E

2 I, KELLY J. DOMIANO, a Certified Court
3 Reporter, Certificate #23035, in good standing with
4 the State of Louisiana, as the officer before whom
5 this meeting was taken, do hereby certify that the
6 foregoing 95 pages;

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5 Signed:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Kelly J. Domiano". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

6
7 KELLY J. DOMIANO, CCR
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