



REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS

for

Bossier Chamber of Commerce

Bossier City, Louisiana

June 14, 2011

**National Community Development Services, Inc.
3155 Roswell Road, N.E., Suite 250
Atlanta, Georgia 30305
(404) 231-0730**

**Tom DiFiore
President**

**Michael A. Vlies
Project Director**

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. INTRODUCTION	3
• <i>Background</i>	
• <i>Interviewee List</i>	
II. FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN	5
III. KEY FINDINGS	6
IV. NCDS RECOMMENDATIONS	28
• <i>Campaign Recommendation, Goal and Timing</i>	
• <i>Recommended Next Steps</i>	
• <i>Leadership & Organization</i>	
• <i>Program/Organizational Refinement</i>	
• <i>Public Relations: Recommended Key Messages</i>	
• <i>Key Messages/Positioning</i>	
V. EXHIBITS	33
A) <i>Methodology</i>	
B) <i>Prospectus/Preliminary Case for Support</i>	
C) <i>Pre Interview Letter</i>	
D) <i>Questionnaire</i>	
E) <i>Interviewee List</i>	
F) <i>Investment Range Table</i>	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 45 confidential interviews NCDS conducted as part of its feasibility analysis and goal assessment of the Bossier Chamber's *Focus Forward* program revealed far more than a straightforward reaction to the proposed plan. Accordingly, the best path forward is somewhat unclear, as there may be a variety of approaches that could lead to funding and programmatic success. In this *Report and Recommendations*, we attempt to provide some clarity with regard to key elements of fundraising success, as well as some insight into the more complex issues that will significantly influence the level of eventual community support (financially and otherwise) for the initiative. Additionally, we provide some recommendations for the Chamber's leaders to consider as they proceed forward from this point.

Key Elements: a "mixed bag"

The fundamental elements that determine an organization's level of "asking rights," and are reliable predictors of fundraising outcomes, include:

- * the need;
- * the plan;
- * the organization's reputation and perceived competency (including board strength);
- * the availability and willingness of strong volunteer champions;
- * the financial capacity of constituents and stakeholders;
- * the degree of urgency for program implementation.

Based on the responses of the interviewees, the only elements we can assert as being definitively positive are the need (for a strategic, proactive approach to Bossier's economic growth and prosperity), and the financial capacity of the community to adequately fund such a program.

The leadership component, at this point in time, is clearly a negative, since there are no apparent champions with the requisite credibility and influence who are willing to make this initiative a top personal and community priority.

The plan, organization, and urgency elements are best described as "neutral" or uncertain at this point, with each having some positive and some negative factors. While interviewees were generally supportive of each of the plan's components, there were a number of concerns about duplication with other organizations; suggestions that it may be too broadly focused; and questions about what would specifically be accomplished, and how it would be executed.

As an organization, the Chamber is highly regarded for its tireless effort, its noble intentions, and its potential as a convener of multiple communities of interests. But its volunteer leadership is not perceived as having the clout and influence needed to drive an initiative like this and galvanize the major stakeholders in support of it. Additionally,

there are some who are skeptical about the Chamber's ability to implement what the plan proposes.

A healthy sense of urgency among some to fundamentally change the community's approach to, and attitude about its future is somewhat offset by a sense of complacency, lack of any real crisis, and the apparent resistance of some to change, embrace new ideas, and invite new voices to the leadership table.

Cautionary community issues and dynamics

The challenges described above can certainly be overcome. If those findings represented the full extent of our assessment, we would likely recommend proceeding immediately with a campaign, and using the campaign process to address the shortcomings, as many other communities have successfully done. But a number of underlying community dynamics advise a degree of caution and the need to successfully navigate these dynamics before proceeding with a formal fundraising campaign. We contend that *Focus Forward's* success will require acknowledging, and in some cases, confronting:

- * The "Bossier vs. Shreveport" issue, and what - if any - part of this program should be more regional in scope
- * The frequently mentioned "good old boy" network that is perceived by many to be the behind the scenes power in Bossier
- * (Closely related to the above point) The need for a new leadership table to allow new people and ideas to help shape and influence Bossier's future
- * The dismissive attitude of some regarding the Chamber's "place" and relevance to important community and economic issues
- * The lack of any clear, shared agenda or vision of Bossier's desired future and how it will achieve it

Our conclusion: opportunity for Chamber to step up as change agent

If the priority for Chamber leaders is to deliver value and relevance to the community through a discernible change in how Bossier's key stakeholders envision, plan for, and enable community and economic development, there is real opportunity to become a true change agent that will be widely embraced and supported (financially and otherwise). Conversely, if the objective is simply to secure additional funds for the organization, expectations should be more modest. Without seriously addressing some of the challenges mentioned above, a campaign could likely achieve \$2 million - \$2.5 million in five year commitments. If, however, the Chamber proceeds with a strategy similar to what is recommended in this report, and the desired objectives are achieved, we believe \$4 million - \$4.5 million could be achievable.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

The Bossier Parish/Northwest Louisiana region is a vibrant area that offers a variety of assets and opportunities, a region that residents and businesses alike are proud to call “home.” As noted by authors of Bossier City history, Bossier City has thrived because it is “transitional,” beginning with the river landing, railroads, Barksdale Air Force base, oil & gas, gaming, and now technology.

The principal theme of Bossier is “growth.” Blessed with a confluence of two interstate highways, railroad lines, an active port, and regional air service, Bossier Parish is in the right place at the right time to experience unprecedented transitional growth and prosperity.

Excellent quality of life, low costs of living and doing business, superior health care services, improving schools, an expanding Cyber Research Park, and continuing growth at Barksdale are just some of the attributes that make Bossier Parish a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

Bossier Chamber leaders and professional staff developed a first ever aggressive **five year strategic plan** prospectus, entitled ***Focus Forward*** - a plan to not only serve the existing diverse economic base, but to build upon the area’s strength’s in helping to safeguard this region’s excellent quality of life and future prosperity.

The Chamber engaged National Community Development Services, Inc. (NCDS) to assist in obtaining input from business, local government, and community leaders to gain feedback on the plan being proposed for the future of Bossier Parish. The history of the region, which would later be learned through interviews, was summed up early by one community elder, “The river is wider and deeper than you think.” During April and May 2011, the NCDS staff conducted 45 confidential interviews with local firms and individuals, gathering substantial input regarding the proposal to fund the five year initiative. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of interviewees were members of the Bossier Chamber Board of Directors.

NCDS staff tabulated, aggregated, and analyzed all qualitative and quantitative interviewee feedback. The following findings and recommendations are the result of this effort.

Interviewee List

The NCDS team interviewed the following representative mix of private individuals, business leaders, and elected officials (Exhibit E includes interviewee's companies & organizations):

Bill Altimus	David Alvis	William L. Bailey
Lou Chandler Jr.	Thomas M. Clark	Emile Cordaro
James L. Dean	John Dean	Caldwell Dunn
James K. Elrod	George Fritze	Lance George
John Good Jr.	Hedy S. Hebert	Jim Henderson
Paula Hickman	Rick Holland	Gary Hubbard
Sarie N. Joubert	Joyce C. Jeffrey	Bobby E. Jelks
Jim Johnson	Don Jones	Walter Lamb
Greg Lott	Kara B. Lowrie	William Lunn
D.C. Machen Jr.	Ian McElroy	John M. Moore
Loy Beene Moore	Neal Pounders	Mike Rich
Robert Robinson	Rocky Rockett	Denny Rogers
J. Kent Rogers	John F. Sharp	Jason D. Smith
Craig Spohn	Rod Taylor	Jeff R. Thompson
Harold Turner	Murray Viser	Lorenz Walker
Matt Wallace	Jeff Wyatt	

II. FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

It is well established that the following fundamental elements should be present in order to conduct a successful fundraising campaign. Satisfaction of these elements endows an organization/its leaders with “asking rights.” The central purpose of each interview conducted by the NCDS team was to uncover the presence or absence of these fundamental elements and, correspondingly, the existence of “asking rights” for the Bossier Chamber of Commerce.

1. Compelling Need.

The need should be a societal, community, or individual need—not an organizational need.

2. Effective Plan to Meet the Need.

The plan should provide a practical, appropriate solution/response to the need.

3. Board Inner Circle Fundraising Strength.

The inner circle should be enthusiastic and committed to executing a successful campaign and bringing the program/project to fruition. Moreover, the inner circle should have the capability to support the campaign generously with their financial means, time, and other resources.

4. Board/Staff/Inner Circle Public Image.

The inner circle should comprise respected citizen leaders whose collective reputation is that of an organization that will accomplish its mission to execute a successful funding campaign and implement the program.

5. Constituency Has Adequate Financial Resources.

Individuals, corporations, and foundations in the community that care about the organization/need should have the financial capacity to fund it.

6. Potential Campaign Leaders Available and Interested/Committed.

Leaders of influence and financial means should currently be associated with/committed to the client organization and the project. Alternatively, there should be strong reason to believe the client could readily recruit leaders of appropriate stature and means.

7. Sense of Urgency Should Exist.

A plausible reason to fund this program NOW should exist.

III. KEY FINDINGS

As reflected in the Questionnaire found at Exhibit D, the NCDS team asked interviewees a battery of questions designed to uncover the presence or absence of the fundamental elements known to be necessary to conduct a successful campaign. Information gleaned from these interviews will be critical to the Bossier Chamber of Commerce's decision regarding whether to move forward with a campaign, and will assist the Chamber in positioning and executing a campaign should that decision be affirmative.

1. The Need

NCDS asked interviewees a series of questions whose answers would indicate the perceived need for more aggressive, focused community & economic development efforts. These questions covered local economic conditions, the economic "trend-line," the need to accelerate the pace, their own business or industry's performance, and the area's strengths and weaknesses. Interviewees responded in the following numbers and percentages. Most interesting was the open-ended question related to change.

- **How would you characterize the Bossier/NW Louisiana current economic climate?**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Total #: 45	23	19	3	0
Percentage:	51%	42%	7%	0%

- **How would you characterize the Bossier/NW Louisiana economic climate as compared to five years ago?**

	Better	Worse	Same
Total #: 43	31	2	10
Percentage:	72%	5%	23%

- How would you characterize your business/industry's performance over the past five years?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Total #: 39	15	22	2	0
Percentage:	39%	56%	5%	0%

- Do you feel that sufficient economic growth is occurring to maintain or improve the area's economy and quality of life in future years? Is there a need to accelerate the pace of economic growth in Bossier Parish?

	Yes	No	Somewhat
Total #: 45	38	0	7
Percentage:	84%	0%	16%

- What are Bossier Parish's greatest strengths and assets for economic growth?

The interviewees identified over 30 aspects of the Bossier regional area that represent a strength or competitive advantage for economic growth. Those mentioned most frequently and consistently included:

- ✓ Barksdale Air Force base
- ✓ Low cost of living
- ✓ Economic diversity
- ✓ Bossier Parish Comm. College
- ✓ Great healthcare facilities/services
- ✓ Good highway system
- ✓ Public leadership cooperation
- ✓ Improving school system
- ✓ Low cost of doing business
- ✓ Cyber Innovation Center

- **Weaknesses or obstacles?**

26 items were mentioned as possible impediments to economic development. The most often cited areas for improvement/concern included:

- ✓ Low wages
- ✓ Poor air service/high costs
- ✓ Lack of trained/skilled workforce
- ✓ Lack of cultural opportunities for professionals
- ✓ Outdated Infrastructure
- ✓ Low educational standards
- ✓ Lack of bold vision/complacency
- ✓ Insufficient technical training resources

- **If you could make one change in the community - TODAY - what would it be?**

Interviewees suggested, with a degree of commonality, a total of 25 changes that they would make in the community. The top 5 most frequently noted were:

1. Improve secondary educational programs/standards, and upgrade technical skill program offerings.
2. Stop the “protectionist” practices between Bossier and Caddo Parishes.
3. Consolidate the communities of Bossier & Shreveport into one regional Metroplex.
4. Overcome the “good old boy” approach to getting things done.
5. Upgrade Infrastructure, particularly the roads.

Other changes suggested with some frequency included greater Bossier Parish School Board transparency, improved communications between community organizations, and greater citizen support for quality of life issues.

Analysis

Interviewees ranked the current economic climate quite strong, with ninety-three percent (93%) viewing the climate as “Good to Excellent.” It is therefore not surprising that the momentum of community and economic development is seen as increasing. The planned expansion of the 3000 acre National Cyber Research Park; the continued growth of Barksdale Air Force base; and the Haynesville Shale offer unique opportunities for new business development and existing business expansion. Characterized by a diverse economic base that has weathered (some say “dodged”) the recent national economic downturn, the growth trend-line for Bossier Parish remains pointed up. Many view ***Focus Forward*** as an effective leadership tool that could become the “Go To” program to “get ahead of the growth” building in the region. Most

believe the community of Bossier cannot sit back and watch growth just happen under the assumption that Barksdale and Haynesville Shale will remain regional economic drivers forever. The community simply cannot afford complacency or to presume a more prosperous future. “Strength through diversity” was a common refrain among interviewees in suggesting the future needs of Bossier Parish.

Our candid and confidential discussions also reveal some recurring themes with regard to the Bossier Parish relationship with neighboring Caddo Parish – an issue that many believe continues to stunt significant economic growth. Public and private leadership groups continue to struggle with the status of their respective community regarding which one is adding the greatest economic bang for the buck to the region, and by right deserves the greatest amount of development funding.

Bossier complains that it has lived in the shadow of Shreveport. Shreveport complains that it garners no respect from Bossier for its regional efforts. This “Us vs. Them” mentality is viewed by the majority of interviewees as old and tired. This region will continue to grow in large part from the migration of new faces; new families at Barksdale, and new businesses attached to the growth of the Cyber Research Park.

These protectionist beliefs and practices have resulted in mistrust, territorial protection, and the duplication of organizational economic development efforts. Not a good formula for success. Interviewees expressed a desire for greater cooperation between regional leaders, noting that duplication of efforts only weakens the firepower of economic development funding when CEO’s are asked to support multiple organization’s trying to reach the same economic goals. Some Interviewees also thought that the duplication of economic development efforts caused more than one local organization to face their own identity crises in terms of settling upon their mission.

Many suggested the need for leadership to bridge their differences in ways that offer the greatest economic growth benefits to the community. A number of interviewees suggested starting with long-term programs to build a skilled workforce with the “organic” local labor pool to fill future positions in technology, healthcare, and manufacturing. Many would like to see a push for higher skilled job programs in industries of the future, especially through partnerships with the Cyber Innovation Center and Bossier Parish Community College. Programs such as this would attract technology companies, a higher educated professional workforce, and produce skilled technical workers to support these companies, while promoting educational advancement among lower income residents.

Many view ***Focus Forward*** as a key leadership tool that addresses first and foremost the needs of Bossier Parish, while at the same time recognizing the need to raise the level of cooperation between regional leaders.

Overall, we are encouraged by the desire to accelerate economic development efforts, and by the forward thinking about types of jobs and industries most appropriate and valuable for the community. We also appreciate the realistic and pragmatic views

demonstrated by the stakeholders with whom we spoke. In short, they want more growth and prosperity, but they know it will take time, effort, and some changes in the way the community views economic development and how it presents itself to the outside.

Representative Comments

“Haynesville Shale has insulated us from the recent national economic downturn, and we are now poised to springboard our own economy.”

“A lot of things are going right in our community, particularly with the cooperation between public officials.”

“It is exciting to see Bossier Parish grow faster than the national economy.”

“CIC and Barksdale both hold such great promise for new jobs. What we need now are the programs to help develop them.”

“It seems that there is a lot of unrealized ambition and hope.”

“Focus Forward is what’s called “being prepared” for accelerated economic growth.”

“Focus Forward is necessary! Good economic times cloak the need for good planning and strategy.”

“Let’s not grow simply for growth’s sake.”

“The Bossier Chamber - Shreveport Chamber rivalry must go away! Everyone north of I-10 must work together.”

“Rid the good ole’ boys network, welcome everyone to the table.”

“Raise both public and private education standards.”

“Improve communications between organizations, particularly with the School Board... what are they up to?”

“Upgrade transportation corridors - growth continues to outpace existing conditions.”

“There are too many silo’s in this region. Duplicated economic development efforts handicap our growth.”

“No strong middle class in the area, only a mix of wealthy and poor.”

“Roads and bridges are old and tired, in need of significant upgrade to accommodate the coming growth.”

“I am concerned with not having enough skilled labor. Even with all of our assets, CEO’s/COO’s are hesitant to expand and /or relocate to the area.”

“Fix the airport! No one seems to know what to do. Use the Barksdale leadership to leverage attention with the airlines and Senate funding.”

“Must improve the community ingress/egress to attract large business/jobs.”

“Fixing the airport can be a cooperative effort between Bossier and Caddo leaders to strengthen economic growth. Start by restructuring under the Port Authority.”

“Airport must be first-class!”

“Barksdale’s reputation, it’s military retiree workforce is an awesome asset to the area.”

“Our region’s superior healthcare systems are second to none!”

“Cedric Glover was right when he said that the Red River “joins” Bossier City and Shreveport, not “divides”. “

“We miss the boat many times because we don’t work together.”

2. The Plan

NCDS asked interviewees to comment on the proposed *Focus Forward Initiative*. Opinions and ratings were given for the overall plan, as well as the individual components.

- **What is your overall assessment of the plan?**

As one interviewee responded, “If you are against any of this, you might as well move.”

	Exactly what is needed	Largely on Target	Good 1 st Step	Way Off
Total #: 45	6	27	10	2
Percentage:	13%	60%	23%	4%

The proposed plan identifies five (5) key strategies or initiatives to be implemented over the next five years. The interviewees were asked to review the proposed components and their costs and indicate the degree of importance to them:

- **Initiative I: Workforce and Education (\$971,500)**

	Important Must Do	Somewhat Important	Low Priority	No Opinion
Total #: 45	40	3	2	0
Percentage:	89%	7%	4%	0%

- **Initiative II: Business Development/Business Ready Climate (\$665,500)**

	Must Do Must Do	Somewhat Important	Low Priority	No Opinion
Total #: 44	28	13	2	1
Percentage:	64%	30%	4%	2%

- Initiative III: Barksdale Air Force Base (\$1.404M)

	Must Do Must Do	Somewhat Important	Low Priority	No Opinion
Total #: 45	36	6	2	1
Percentage:	80%	14%	4%	2%

- Initiative IV: Business Advocacy (\$559,000)

	Must Do	Somewhat Important	Low Priority	No Opinion
Total #: 45	33	9	1	2
Percentage:	73%	20%	2%	5%

- Initiative V: Branding/Marketing/Image Enhancement (\$840,000)

	Must Do	Somewhat Important	Low Priority	No Opinion
Total #: 45	25	12	4	4
Percentage:	56%	26%	9%	9%

Analysis

Many interviewees believe the strategies contained in the *Focus Forward* initiative represent an effective approach that is largely on target to achieve desired economic growth and development in Bossier Parish. The Workforce & Education and Barksdale AFB strategies led the way in gaining the strongest support for the Chamber to pursue over the next five years.

Some others believe that because *Focus Forward* is a first generation initiative launched by the Bossier Chamber, it should be viewed as a first step for the organization and will require a great deal of program refinement.

An overwhelming majority of interviewees were also supportive of both the Business Development and Business Advocacy strategies, believing that advocacy for the

business members and promoting a common legislative agenda is vital to the Chamber's core mission. One interviewee suggested that Business Advocacy should be the Chamber's *primary* mission. He believes if they are not advocating, they are not doing their job. Some interviewees struggled to comprehend exactly what the Business Development component was intended to do, and a few suggested that it appeared to overlap what GBEDF does.

The Branding strategy was viewed favorably by most. Not only because of how such a strategy will help erase much of the negative perceptions of Louisianans but also because of the need for Bossier Parish to distinguish itself in the region, focusing on the positives, such as its low crime rate, improving schools, and military retirement opportunities. Despite the general approval for this strategy, many believe that it may be more than the Chamber can "bite off," and that doing it effectively will require a wide range of support and participation by other organizations and agencies.

Many interviewees expressed confusion concerning respective roles of various regional organizations attempting to grow the region. Asking how the Chamber fits into the mix, they conjectured that some of *Focus Forward* may be outside of the Chamber's primary mission of membership development. Some even suggested that parts of the program are redundant and duplicative of the efforts and missions of other organizations & agencies.

A number of Interviewees suggested that Chamber leadership carefully re-examine any economic development actions deemed duplicative of other regional organizations and present an initiative that is outside the box and unique to the community leaders. An initiative where the results can be tracked and measured, producing a quantifiable return on investment is also paramount.

While not reflected in the above statistics, we offer a brief comment on the idea of a broader regional effort. Northwest Louisiana is blessed with an abundance of shared assets, including Barksdale AFB, Haynesville Shale, the Port, gaming, and superior healthcare facilities. While most respondents instinctively understand the wisdom and likely effectiveness of eventually joining forces with development organizations from both sides of the Red River, we recommend this issue be tabled for now and revisited once *Focus Forward* is up and running producing measurable results. This will strengthen the Chamber's asking rights as the "Go To" action oriented organization. Concerning regionalism, there seems to be an ingrained bias among some that any effort intended to benefit Bossier businesses and residents must, by definition, be confined to the boundaries of Bossier Parish. There are likely similar sentiments among some Caddo leaders. These biases must be addressed and changed through ongoing dialogue and education and awareness about the importance of *regions* (not cities or counties) in a global economy. We believe the *Focus Forward* initiative will benefit from having select leaders from surrounding communities participate in its refinement, funding, leadership, and execution.

Representative Comments

“Economic development is very competitive among communities and Bossier needs to be doing whatever they can to be part of it.”

“Overall, a very ambitious and aggressive Chamber initiative, but it is a triumph worth doing.”

“The Focus Forward plan is a good base-line to launch significant and measurable economic development programs for the area.”

“The Chamber should be involved in helping to create a higher educated workforce. And it can begin with the teachers. Create a program to “teach the teachers” how to teach math & science skills to support the technology park.”

“Start with lower income literacy programs for adults, working with BPCC and local manufacturers to create specialized programs. You strengthen the local middle class by lifting up the lower class.”

“Put all your money in Workforce & Education – it’s all about our citizens having a job.”

“There is definitely a need for the “little guy” to be represented by the Chamber. Pay attention to them, find ways that they can be given extra consideration when seeking contracts with larger corporations, and work closer with CIC.”

“The Chamber should be the standard bearer for Business Development.”

“Chamber efforts should pave the way for economic development, not engage in economic development.”

“Create a strong jobs network for Barksdale spouses. As they say, “Happy wife, happy life.”

“Must fight to be certain that the Bossier Chamber is a player with future Barksdale commands that will no doubt require fewer people because of technology developments.”

“Is some of this plan outside of the Chamber’s mission?”

“The Barksdale strategy is good to support, but to the tune of \$1.4M?”

“Isn’t Barksdale Forward and the Military Affairs Council already doing the action steps for the Barksdale AFB strategy?”

“The Bossier Chamber can serve the business community as a unifier, but must

maintain assurance of diversity through ties with CIC and BPCC.”

“Without Barksdale, we fold our tent.”

“Make sure that we are never out of the room when decisions are made.”

“Don’t know who else can do Business Advocacy more effectively than the Chamber.”

“The Chamber must better understand the depth of political talent at both the State and Federal levels.”

“The Branding strategy is critical to leap frog negative perceptions of this area, to take this community to the next level. Right now, outsiders see us as Billy The Exterminator.”

“Bossier Parish must not be lumped in with the overall negative image of Louisiana. Branding must distinguish Bossier as unique. Promoting a community is no different than promoting a business - one must demonstrate its uniqueness.”

“Build workforce development programs around the “current/planned” industries that will dominate the Bossier Parish landscape for generations, tapping “organic” labor that upgrade skill sets for the lower and middle income market, providing a ready higher skilled labor pool while raising per capita income for the Parish.”

“The Chamber recognizes that our school system is a calling card for Bossier Parish, requiring collaboration of organizations and innovative programs.”

- **What changes/modifications to the initiative would you like to see?**

The scope of the initiative was viewed by many as duplicative of other organizations that are doing economic development, tourism, or military relations. Some observed too many action steps with too much going on to effectively manage and track results. This is where program refinement will serve as a critical function in building a winning Case for Investment.

The most frequently suggested modifications involve beefing up the Education strategy using Bossier Parish test scores as benchmarks; creating Workforce programs that support current and future industries; and tapping into a stronger defined educational partnership with Cyber Innovation Center and Bossier Parish Community College.

Many of the interviewees were also small business leaders, successful family led organizations that would like to see greater support for their growth and expansion. As one respondent observed, *“I may not be a huge corporation, but my family helped to build this community and we are not going anywhere.”* Lisa Johnson has been viewed

as a welcome and proactive Chamber executive who makes it a point to “reach out” to the little guy and many would like to see her efforts continue.

A number of interviewees advocated adding a specific strategy to overhaul the regional airport, beginning with the governance of the authority and management of the operation. The airport was viewed as a critical component to the economic growth of Bossier Parish and the entire NW Louisiana region, touching the personal lives of residents on both sides of the river. Most agreed that a bold stand by the Chamber would not only elevate the leadership perception of *Focus Forward*, but would also present a unique venue for regional public and private community leaders to cooperate in building a first-class air operation that would Pave The Way for economic growth and development.

3. Board/Inner Circle Fundraising Strength

Analysis

Thirteen (13) of the forty-five (45) interviews were conducted with Bossier Chamber board members. They were overwhelmingly positive about launching the *Focus Forward* initiative, yet expressed little or no desire to accept campaign volunteer leadership duties. Most of the board member financial indications were relatively small and would not likely inspire others to make this an urgent community priority. NCDS' experience has proven that in order to launch a successful fundraising campaign, an organization's board leadership must demonstrate early and significant commitment to the broader community of stakeholders.

More than one interviewee suggested the need to strengthen the Chamber board vetting process, selecting members driven by "leadership strength" vs. "industry strength," thereby inviting the right community leader to the right seat. Others suggested tapping into a younger group of corporate professionals, bringing fresh faces, fresh ideas, and active participation to the board, assisting the organization's rise to the next generational level of growth, thus expanding and strengthening the Chamber's efforts and help broaden its base of support beyond Bossier City.

Of the sixty-three (63) names interviewees suggested as top community leaders, five (5) are members of the board and only two (2) made the Top 10 leadership mentions. Many view the general board as being filled with "2nd in Commanders." While many of the board members are known and liked by others in the community, they are not generally believed to have the influence and reputation needed to drive such an ambitious effort and attract others to the cause. Moreover, they lack the financial capacity to set the pace for an aggressive fundraising campaign.

Representative Comments

"Most members are grandstanding."

"The board has a strong fiduciary focus, a moderate strategic focus, and a low generative focus. i.e., they take their jobs seriously but get little done."

"Members are more social than anything, a real mixed bag."

"The Executive Committee is very good, but the others are along for the ride."

"The board looks stale, in need of dynamic change, an infusion of young leaders."

"This list is conspicuously lacking in any real heavy hitters or movers and shakers."

4. Board/Staff Organizational Public Image

NCDS asked interviewees to comment on (1) the effectiveness of the Chamber Staff, (2) the effectiveness of the Board of Directors and (3) the collective community/economic development efforts in the Bossier/NW Louisiana area over the past five (5) years. Interviewees responded in the following numbers and percentages.

- How would you rate the effectiveness of the Chamber Staff?

	Very Effective	Moderately Effective	Ineffective	Unsure
Total #: 45	21	15	0	9
Percentage:	47%	33%	0%	20%

- How would you rate the effectiveness of the Chamber's Board of Directors?

	Very Effective	Moderately Effective	Ineffective	Unsure
Total #: 45	5	19	3	18
Percentage:	11%	42%	7%	40%

- How would you rate the collective community & economic development efforts in the Bossier / NW Louisiana area over the past five (5) years?

	Very Effective	Moderately	Ineffective	Unsure
Total #: 45	7	29	3	6
Percentage:	16%	64%	7%	13%

- How would you rate the effectiveness of the Bossier Chamber in contributing to economic growth?

	Very Effective	Moderately	Ineffective	Unsure
Total #: 45	12	18	3	12
Percentage:	27%	40%	7%	26%

Analysis

Interviewees hold very favorable views of the Chamber Staff, particularly for the Chamber Executive Lisa Johnson. Many admire Lisa’s leadership in steering the daily duties of the organization through difficult staff and policy changes. The Board of Directors is less known by many of the interviewees. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the interviewees rated the Chamber Staff as very effective to moderately effective while only half did the same for the Board of Directors. Although the Chamber’s public image has been lifted as a result of Lisa’s leadership, the staff is perceived by many as “ribbon cutters,” and a higher skilled professional staff would be needed to effectively launch and manage the proposed initiative.

Given all of the discussion regarding “who is stepping on who’s economic development toes,” it is critical to note that sixty-six percent (66%) of interviewees believe the Chamber is moderately to very effective in contributing to economic growth, particularly in the area of legislative advocacy.

Seventy-nine percent (79%) felt that the region’s collective economic development efforts were “moderate” to “very effective,” yet many also observed that local economic development organizations seem fractured in the delivery of their product. Based on the responses from our interview sample (and partially on our own observations), there is a divergence of perceptions, opinions, and knowledge about the respective missions, activities, and effectiveness of the many organizations/agencies that operate in this space. Included among these are NLEP, GBEDF, Shreveport Chamber, Bossier Chamber, and multiple city and parish governments.

Since an independent assessment or evaluation of these entities is beyond the scope of our assignment, the most definitive conclusion we can draw is that there is significant confusion, uncertainty, and skepticism with regard to “who does what” and “how effective they are.” As in the case of many organizations in other communities, we suspect there may be a significant gap between “what their mission says they do” and “what they actually do.” It also appears that, without any real information or insight, many of the “uninformed” simply assume an organization is in fact doing what their mission says they are doing. For purposes of this report and recommendations, and for advancing the cause of the *Focus Forward* program, we can make two assertions:

1.) All of these organizations would benefit from more scrutiny by their stakeholders and those stakeholders should demand appropriate levels of transparency, accountability, and return on the community's investment; and 2.) Despite the high level of satisfaction and appreciation for the Bossier Chamber's efforts, there appear to be some underlying biases/perceptions that could hinder its ability to proceed with the *Focus Forward* initiative. Many view Lisa as a strong leader, and her staff as hard working and personable, but are uncertain if they collectively have the skills and knowledge to execute the proposed program.

Of greater concern is the (unarticulated, but obvious to many) notion that the Chamber should not aspire to such bold and relevant programs and that it should leave the "really important stuff" to others. We believe this perception stems from three underlying causes: gender bias; the aforementioned "good old boys" network; and the need to protect "turf and power." We also believe the previously discussed board issues contribute to these perceptions and limit the Chamber's ability to fight and overcome them.

Representative Comments

"At least one organization needs to articulate a path forward toward genuine economic growth."

"I am convinced that the Bossier Chamber can do something "economic development" that the North Louisiana Partnership can't do. But, whatever that may be, it must not be an activity exclusive to Bossier Parish."

"There are simply too many organizations trying to do economic development. What has been their success?"

"The collective effort has not been well coordinated."

"When I first saw this document, I was angry because so much of it duplicates what GBEDF is doing. There's really only one part of this that I think the Chamber should pursue."

"This region needs to wake up and realize that East Texas is kicking our butt. We need to take some clues from what they're doing."

"I've invested a lot in this community and created a lot of jobs, but they still fight me every chance they get. There are too many people trying to hold on to their power base and feather their own nests."

"The Chamber has made great strides, but they're not part of the cabal that sees themselves as the ones who really make things happen around here."

"The Bossier Chamber does a marvelous job of supporting local and regional

business.”

“The Bossier Chamber’s effectiveness has been limited in part due to the negative attitudes of area business leaders.”

“The Chamber was very helpful in the building of our new bank.”

“Too much self dealing, small thinking, and hanging on to the past. If we don’t embrace new ideas and new people, we’ll miss our chance to be anything other than what we’ve always been.”

“The Bossier Chamber reaches out to local small business - whoever is pushing that button is doing a real good job.”

“Lisa does a great job, is well known, and well respected.”

“The Chamber staff have so much heart!”

“Lisa and her staff are trying to stay out in front of growth.”

5. Financial Resources of Constituency

NCDS asked interviewees whether a goal of \$4.4 million was attainable. Interviewees responded in the following numbers and percentages.

- **The proposed program requires a five-year, \$4.4 million investment from area investors. Is this an achievable funding goal?**

	Yes	No	Unsure
Total #: 45	20	8	17
Percentage:	44%	18%	38%

Analysis

We believe some of the uncertainty surrounding the ability to raise the tested funding level is attributable to the following:

- 1) *Focus Forward* is the first bold, strategic initiative, certainly of this magnitude, launched by the Bossier Chamber and therefore the organization has little to no track record, which is an important component of “asking rights.”
- 2) In the NW Louisiana community in general, and Bossier specifically, there does not seem to be a strong, established “culture of giving” for community and economic development related causes. There will be a need to instill such a culture and create a sense among private economic stakeholders that they can and should invest significant resources in organizations and programs like *Future Focus*.
- 3) Good, bad, or indifferent, many interviewees favor a regional approach to the initiative because many rely upon their business growth from clients on both sides of the Red River and can ill afford to upset any constituents by appearing to show favoritism for Bossier over Caddo Parish. This obviously dilutes the potential funding pool.
- 4) Duplication, tied to many local organizations trying to do their own form of economic development without showing any measurable success. What makes *Focus Forward* any different?”

For some interviewees the issue was not so much **if** \$4.4 million could be raised, but **should** \$4.4 million be raised. Among even those who are enthusiastically in support of the proposed initiative, there were many questions about the need for \$4.4 million. They weren’t necessarily suggesting it was an inflated number, but they need more explanation about how the Chamber would actually spend this money. In proceeding with a fundraising effort at any level, campaign goals will need to be clearly matched with defensible budget projections.

Representative Comments

“Show ‘Focus Forward’ can extend a hand to Shreveport.”

“Of course the funding can be raised, what is \$4 million?”

“The price tag is reasonable.”

“More apt to invest very generously if initiative is done as a whole with Shreveport.”

“Not really any big corporate prospects here. There’s a lot of money in private, family hands if you can convince them to support it.”

“There’s plenty of capacity here and this is just the kind of thing we should all be supporting. But I suspect you may have some people who might try to keep it from happening.”

“Doable, but you’ll need some strong leaders out front that people can trust to get this done.”

“Yes, if you can get the City and Parish to give, and figure out how to tap into oil & gas money.”

6. Governance

NCDS asked interviewees for their opinion about who should be responsible for oversight and governance of the *Focus Forward* initiative. As noted below, the response was overwhelmingly in favor of an independent Investors Council rather than the Chamber Board.

	Chamber Board	Investor's Council
Total #: 38	3	35
Percentage:	8%	92%

Representative Comments

"The investors need a place at the table."

"An independent body would help to eliminate the good ole boy influence."

"An Investor Council will be able to track the measurables and hold the initiative accountable for the results."

"Representation at the table must include both private and public leadership from both Bossier and Caddo Parish's."

"Enlist leaders from both sides of the river as a "springboard" around one common interest to foster cooperation over long-term issues."

While not necessarily an indicator of asking rights, NCDS has learned that governance of such initiatives is a critical factor in both fundraising and in implementing the program. It is neither appropriate, nor our role at this point, to recommend a specific governance structure. We can however assert that discussion of governance matters should be part of the program refinement process. By addressing this matter early in the process, key investor and leadership candidates are more likely to buy-in and take ownership of the initiative. Investments are more readily secured when they enable the investor to have a seat at the table and to provide some degree of participation in and oversight of the program. Proper consideration of governance can often be the difference between "token" and "capacity" level investments.

7. Availability of Potential Campaign Leaders

NCDS asked interviewees whether they would be willing to play an active role in the campaign and/or make calls to “open doors” to prospects. Interviewees responded in the following numbers and percentages:

A. Campaign Leader

	Yes	No	Maybe
Total #: 45	9	20	16
Percent:	20%	45%	35%

B. Campaign Door Opener

	Yes	No	Maybe
Total #: 45	24	11	10
Percent:	53%	25%	22%

Analysis

NCDS has always found the availability and interest of potential campaign leaders/champions of appropriate financial capacity, access, and influence is the critical element bearing on campaign success. NCDS asked interviewees to recommend potential key leaders and also asked whether they themselves would accept some form of leadership position. A total of sixty three (63) names were mentioned.

Those potential leaders named most often are listed in the following Recommendations section to this report. The named leaders are believed to have the ability to help obtain access to the most important individual, corporate, and foundation prospects. Engaging a representative portion of them in active leadership roles will be critical to the success of the campaign.

Fifty-five percent (55%) of interviewees expressed they would either accept a leadership position or would at least consider doing so, and a strong ninety-two percent (92%) similarly expressed they would consider serving as a “door opener.” Unfortunately, of the Top 10 most frequently named leadership candidates, four (4) were not interviewed (due to scheduling conflicts) and only two (2) are members of the Chamber Board. Most of the region’s leadership elders describe themselves as behind the scenes players, and would prefer to remain as such. This explains, in part, the observation made by some that the Chamber Board is largely made up of “2nd in Commanders.” It is also concerning that 7 of the Top 10 lead financial indicators answered “No” to their interest in helping to lead the campaign. The Chamber (with NCDS’ guidance) should seek to engage these and other leaders early in the campaign to secure some level of commitment to driving the plan and project to success. NCDS’ Recommendations will be geared toward accomplishing this goal. Despite the fact that fifty-five percent (55%) of those interviewed expressed they might help with a campaign, there is clearly work to be done to enlist champions who will embrace the kind of personal commitment that will be necessary to win a campaign.

8. Sense of Urgency

Bossier Parish and Northwest Louisiana have experienced phenomenal growth in recent years, in stark contrast to the national economic downturn over the past few years. In fact, many view Bossier Parish as “behind the growth curve” in terms of upgraded infrastructure and the training of enough skilled workers to meet the current and expected growth in technology, healthcare, and manufacturing.

Because of these conditions, there is not the kind of urgency associated with the need to fix or avoid a crisis. There is however recognition that growth must be managed and that future prosperity will require planning and preparedness. Some, but not all, also appreciate the unique window of opportunity that Bossier and the region have, and that capitalizing on that opportunity requires action *now*.

Some interviewees suggested that Bossier Parish and Northwest Louisiana have been lulled into a sense of comfort and complacency because of Barksdale AFB, oil & gas reserves, CIC, casinos and other assets, and that there is a sense that the area is simply on “auto-pilot” and will grow regardless of any economic development initiative launched by any organization.

Our assessment of this factor is that the degree of urgency required to ensure campaign success is not currently present, or at least not evident among a large number of potential investors. However, we believe that the right leaders, armed with the right message can overcome complacency/lack of distress to create the requisite sense of urgency needed to execute a campaign.

Representative Comments

“Focus Forward is the first time that I have seen either the Bossier or Shreveport Chambers make an effort to showcase the best of our region.”

“Focus Forward will be a life changer for most. This is the best time to push forward.”

“This is exactly the right time for Focus Forward! Many pieces are already in place with unlimited potential to exceed this regions’ wildest expectations.”

“The Bossier Chamber is saying, Don’t talk, let’s do it!”

“The Focus Forward plan is causing us to have long-overdue conversations that we would not ordinarily have.”

“The Bossier Chambers positive attitude helps the community’s desire to grow!”

IV. NCDS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are in response and proportion to the aforementioned key findings. The Bossier Chamber of Commerce adherence to and execution of these recommendations will give the Chamber the best chance to reach or exceed the funding goal.

Campaign Recommendation, Goal and Timing

Despite the broad support for the Bossier Chamber and for the *idea* of the *Focus Forward* Program, NCDS recommends that the launch of a campaign to fund it be delayed. A number of programmatic, structural and leadership issues need to be addressed in order to optimize both the funding level and the eventual implementation of the program. **If a process to cultivate and engage a handful of key leaders/investors is executed correctly, we believe a \$4 million campaign is achievable – perhaps the full \$4.4 million.** If, however, Chamber leaders decide to “short cut” the process of optimization, we predict a campaign would achieve \$2 million - \$2.5 million. Our concern over an immediate launch is derived from 4 potential negative factors:

1. Our belief that some potentially key stakeholders and investors might actively “undermine” the Chamber’s efforts to elevate its relevance and value in Bossier’s economic future.
2. There are not currently any true “champions” of Focus Forward with the strength, influence, and credibility needed to position the initiative as a critical community priority in the eyes of the most likely top investor prospects
3. Further refinement and buy-in of the program is needed to provide detailed information about its objectives, strategies, and tactics; and to eliminate confusion and concerns over “mission scope” and duplication.
4. Several potentially large investors need to be cultivated and/or persuaded that an investment in Focus Forward would be an investment in “action and outcomes” – not just “talk and ideas.”

Perhaps the best way to articulate our recommendation to proceed with care is to convey something we have learned in over 33 years of community and economic development fundraising: *A slow “yes” is better than a fast “no.”* Launching a campaign without proper preparation would, in our opinion, run the risk of getting a “fast no” from too many key investors and leaders, which would have a negative domino effect on the campaign.

The factors mentioned above can certainly be overcome. In fact, the *process* undertaken in overcoming them will increase the campaign’s viability and the program’s value exponentially. But the process required is not one that can easily be put into a timeline, nor should it be subject to the pressure of a “campaign clock.”

Recommended Next Steps

The following recommendations are provided in overview form. Additional detail can be provided should the Chamber's leaders decide to pursue this strategy. It should also be noted that the process will require a dynamic and adaptive navigation of issues, people, and community agendas. Thus, there is no formulaic approach, and there may be multiple approaches that could lead to the same desired outcome. Our recommendations reflect our knowledge and experience in similar situations and our assessment of what we have learned and observed during the feasibility analysis process.

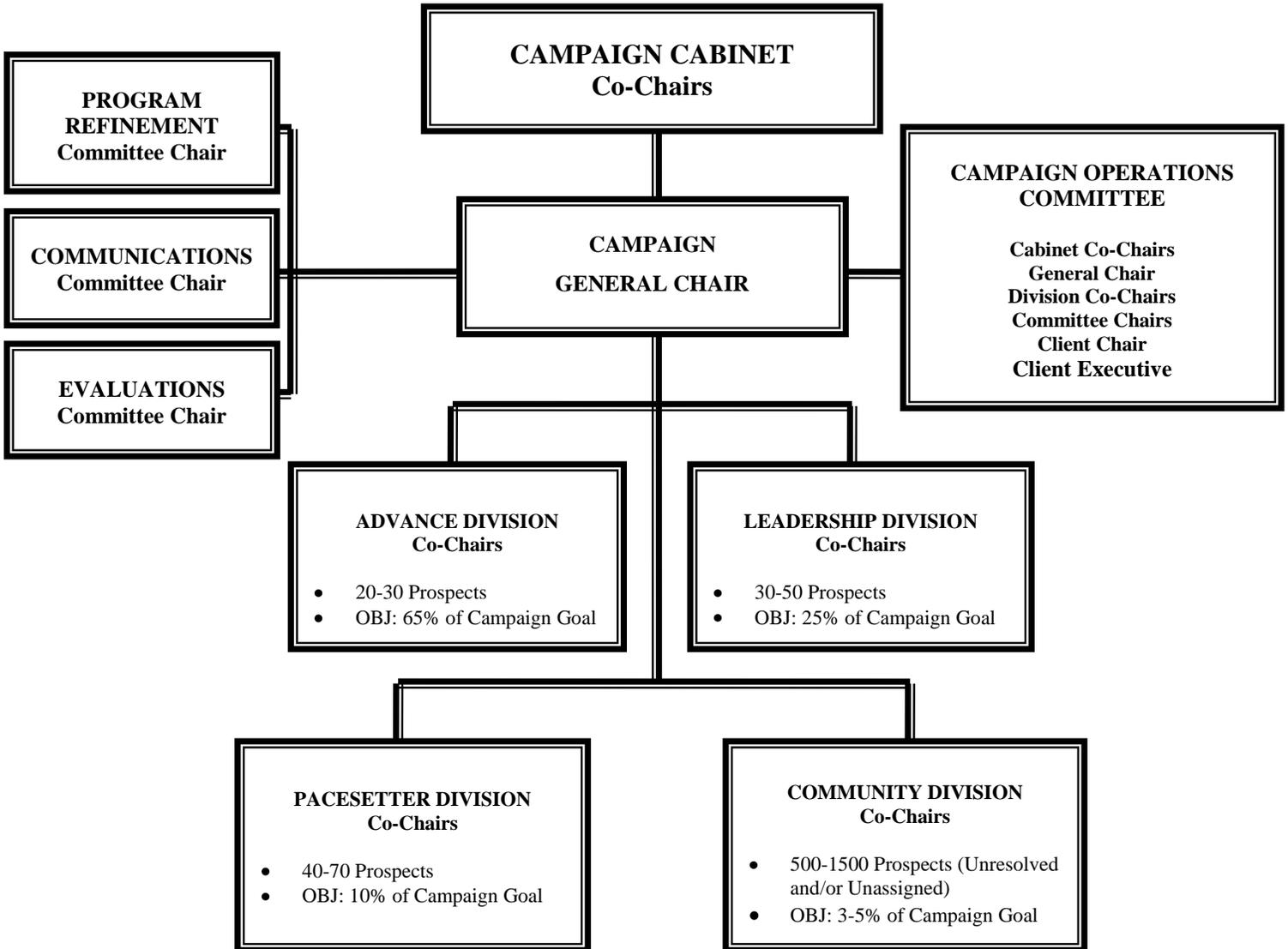
1. The Chamber's board/executive committee should create a Focus Forward Advisory Council, and provide it with requisite authority and decision making ability on matters related to the multi-year initiative and the campaign to fund it.
2. Members of the Advisory Council should be carefully identified and invited to serve. (Membership in the Bossier Chamber *should not* be a prerequisite for inclusion on the council. NCDS will assist in the identification of prospective members, based on our interview intelligence)
3. A series of meetings/roundtable discussions of the Advisory Council to:
 - Review the findings and recommendations of this report
 - Agree on proceeding with a bold, multi-year initiative in the spirit of Focus Forward
 - Reach consensus on the initiative's priorities, scope, geographic focus
 - With professional staff input, develop programs and activities to implement the agreed upon priorities (note: it is conceivable that other organizations may be "tapped" for implementation)
4. Launch a campaign to fund the new initiative. NCDS projects 10 months will be required to reach and exceed a \$4 million goal. The above process *could* condense the campaign timeline to 8 months.

Leadership and Organization

When NCDS team members asked interviewees to identify citizens/leaders who must be out front and visible to get the attention of the community and ensure campaign success, interviewees identified more than sixty-three (63) names. The following individuals were mentioned most often.

Bill Altimus	Jim Henderson	Tem McElroy
Tommy Clark	Gary Hubbard	Jeff Thompson
Jim Elrod	John Hubbard	Harold Turner
Rand Falbaum	Don Jones	Craig Spohn
George Fritze	Kevin McCotter	Lo Walker

A number of these identified leaders—and select others—should be considered during identification and enlistment of the Advisory Council. Once the campaign is launched, leaders of similar stature, influence, and financial capacity will be recruited to form the following campaign leadership structure (or some modification thereof):



Program/Organizational Refinement

As a result of the forty-five (45) interviews conducted, NCDS gained significant input regarding the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the proposed program. Accordingly, we offer the following observations/recommendations for consideration.

- Scale back “action steps” to a number that is manageable and not duplicitous of other economic development organization’s activities.
- More detail and specific objectives are required for people to get a vision of what can happen. This includes the establishment of appropriately aggressive measurable goals and outcomes that can be used to project Return on Investment and community impact.
- A larger regional concept needs to be reflected in at least one major strategic component, thereby demonstrating the importance of community wide cooperation.
- An “existing business” improvement program with all communities will help to strengthen regional concept relationships, demonstrating to businesses of all sizes that Bossier is listening and extending its hand to assist them.
- Increased incentives should not only be offered to new businesses but also designed to encourage existing businesses expansion.
- Launch programs helping to improve the graduation rate, providing technical training, and surveying existing businesses for skills required to develop targeted industries.
- The *Focus Forward* initiative must be positioned as a truly new and unique approach to community and economic development – not simply a continuation or duplication of previous efforts by the GBEDF and NWLP. A critical part of this positioning will be a more clearly articulated organizational and operational structure detailing roles and responsibilities, staffing assignments, budget allocations, time-lines, program governance, aggressive measurables, and a strong ROI.
- The campaign can and should be used as a vehicle to establish a distinct governance structure for *Focus Forward*. Whatever form it takes, this group should be distinguishable from the boards of the implementing organization(s). They will work in concert to achieve the goals, yet membership among them is not mutually exclusive. The objective, whose importance cannot be overstated, is to give key investors and stakeholders an active role in program direction, execution, and on-going evaluation.

Public Relations: Recommended Key Messages

Based on interviewee responses, the NCDS team was able to discern/identify those program messages that seemed to have the most positive impact on interviewees, as well as those which did not appear to resonate. Accordingly, we offer the following recommendations for consideration.

- Continued communications of steps taken and the successes to date are important for the community to appreciate the value of what the Bossier Chamber is doing for the Parish and larger region.
- Busy people prefer to see more frequent reports that highlight key factors rather than long reports with an expanse of information.
- Information concerning successes and future plans also need to reach the general public and go beyond the organization's members.
- Promoting a vision helps bring people together and develop a willingness to support the programs.
- Marketing the Bossier region to domestic and international prospects should be pursued with vigor.
- Leaders and citizens need to be educated and made aware of how the economic development process works and how many different variables are interconnected, and how they influence success or failure (i.e. education, infrastructure, tax issues, quality of life, etc.).

As part of the awareness efforts, communication activities should put *Focus Forward's* strategies and tactics into context so everyone can come together around a shared vision of what is to be achieved and how the community will realize greater prosperity as a result.

V. EXHIBITS

A. Methodology

B. Prospectus

C. Pre-Interview Letter

D. Questionnaire

E. Interviewee List

F. Investment Range Table

EXHIBIT A - METHODOLOGY

NCDS began its Feasibility Analysis and Goal Assessment assignment in the fall of 2009. Over the course of the next year and a half (interrupted by internal Chamber reorganization), NCDS participated in a number of group meetings and individual discussions to help develop a draft program of work. The intent of the program development activities was to identify the most important issues relative to Bossier's economic future, **and** to determine the Chamber's role in addressing those issues.

Relying on extraordinarily helpful input from these meetings and other individual conversations, and utilizing information contained in supporting materials furnished by the Bossier Chamber of Commerce, Chamber staff and NCDS President Tom DiFiore developed a "Prospectus" outlining the vision/draft plan and the proposed budget for the *Focus Forward* initiative. The NCDS team then prepared a "pave-the-way" letter of introduction to accompany the Prospectus.

The next step was to develop a list of prospective interviewees whom Lisa Johnson and Chamber board members estimated would have valuable insight into the feasibility of conducting a successful campaign, and whom were perceived to be capable of providing important financial and other support to a potential campaign. The hard work of Lisa Johnson paid off as they developed a quality list of over 75 prospective interviewees.

Packets including the introductory pave-the-way letter and Prospectus were mailed to each of these prospective interviewees. Jennifer Wyly and Lisa Johnson then took the initiative of making calls to schedule appointments for the NCDS team. Many thanks to both of them for their hard work in securing audiences with interviewees.

The NCDS team then conducted forty-five (45) interviews, beginning on April 18, 2011, and concluding on May 5, 2011. The list of interviewees is included as an exhibit to this report. Those interviewed represented an intentional mix of individuals, business leaders, and elected officials. A carefully crafted Questionnaire served as an interview guide and provided consistency to the interview process. While NCDS representatives did not ask interviewees for money or a pledge of financial support, interviewees were asked to review an "Investment Range Table" indicating levels of financial support normally required to underwrite the estimated \$4.4 million budget for the proposed project. It is the opinion of counsel that, due to a firm guarantee of confidentiality, interviewees spoke with candor. Responses of those interviewed are shown only in the aggregate. Direct, un-attributed quotations, however, are included to convey the tone and flavor of interviewees' comments. Some questions were deliberately designed to elicit comment or promote general conversation and may not be quantifiably tallied. Not all questions were asked of every interviewee due to the nature of their interest level or time available. Key elements of opinion of the stated need, potential to give, potential to lead, and likelihood of campaign success were, however, recorded for all interviewees.

Interviews ranged in length from 30 minutes to an hour, and lasted 45 minutes on average. The NCDS team conducted interviews with forty-five (45) people representing forty-five (45) organizations. All interviewees were generous with their time and most were eager to share their opinions.

The Findings and Recommendations contained in this report are the result of careful analysis by NCDS senior management and staff of the data collected.

EXHIBIT B – PROSPECTUS



Draft

FOCUS FORWARD

*“A bold new strategy for building
Bossier’s economic competitiveness”*

Endorsed and approved by:

Bossier Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee:

*Tommy Clark
Clark & Associates
2011 Chairman*

*Kara Lowrie
Acadiana Mortgage
2012 Chair-Elect*

*Jason Smith
Citizens National Bank
2011 Finance Chair*

*Hedy Hebert
Benefit Consulting Services
2010 Chairman*

*Sandy M. Cimino
Ouachita Independent Bank
Business Dev Chair*

*Emile Cordaro
AEP SWEPCO
Energy Chair*

*Randy Doss
A-1 Charter Service
Membership Dev Chair*

*Jim Henderson
Bossier Parish Community College
Government Relations Chair*

*Sarie Joubert
Chesapeake Energy
Education Chair*

*Terri Mathews
Gumbeaux Productions
Marketing Chair*

*Catherine Vanderberry
Community Volunteer
Military Relations Chair*

*Jeff Thompson
Attorney At Law
Economic Dev Chair*

*Lisa F. Johnson
Bossier Chamber of Commerce
President*

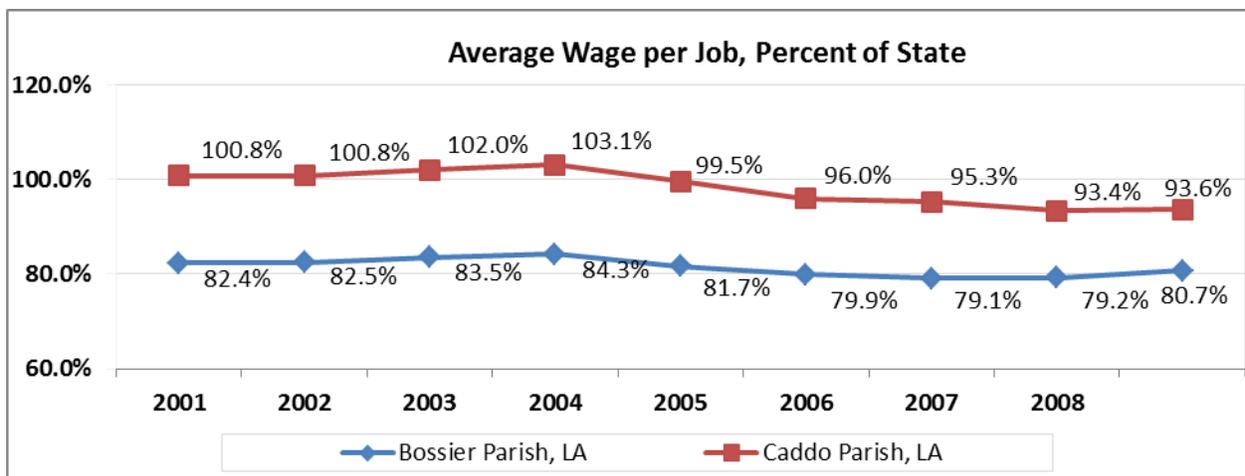
April 2011

A Platform of “READINESS”

The next five years represent a crucial transition into the future of Bossier Parish and the metropolitan area. The momentum of Community and Economic Development is increasing. The planned expansion of our 3,000 acre National Cyber Research Park and the continued growth of Barksdale Air Force Base offer unique opportunities for business development partnered with education initiatives. Our community is in the right place at the right time to experience new levels of growth and prosperity.

But the question is....**ARE WE READY?** Are we being proactive to the opportunities of tomorrow, or reactive? And, will we win what’s at stake tomorrow because we are prepared today? Our potential for future growth and prosperity is cause for great enthusiasm and optimism. Barksdale Air Force Base and Global Strike Command, our National Cyber Research Park [home of the Cyber Innovation Center (CIC)] and the Haynesville Shale, are the best known of many opportunities for our region and our Parish to be a substantial “winner” in tomorrow’s economy. But winning tomorrow requires preparing today – PREPARING NOW!

The leaders of the Bossier Chamber of Commerce are proposing an aggressive approach with a more intentional focus on the key issues that will determine our future. We cannot assume that because we have assets like Barksdale, CIC, and natural gas deposits, we will automatically reap the benefits, and that all we need to do is “sit back and wait” for the companies, jobs, and investments that are undoubtedly coming our way. These are misguided assumptions. A tree that bears fruit will produce *far more fruit* if it is planted in fertile soil, in a favorable climate, with careful pruning and care. Likewise, our local economy will gain *maximum impact and benefit* from these assets and opportunities only if it has the climate, resources, and support needed to grow and thrive. The following data suggest that a more proactive/prepared approach is necessary to improve our economic competitiveness with other communities in the region, the state, and the U.S.



Per Capita Personal Income

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2000-2008 Change
Bossier Parish, LA	\$22,997	\$23,924	\$25,193	\$26,122	\$27,184	\$28,962	\$30,661	\$31,753	\$33,570	46.0%
Caddo Parish, LA	\$25,312	\$27,207	\$27,814	\$29,190	\$30,935	\$33,111	\$35,611	\$35,692	\$37,319	47.4%
State of Louisiana	\$23,570	\$25,370	\$25,943	\$26,701	\$28,057	\$30,086	\$33,776	\$35,340	\$36,091	53.1%

These statistics and others do show improvement and signs that we are moving in the right direction. We certainly do not find ourselves in the same crisis condition as many other U.S. communities. But we cannot afford complacency or to presume a more prosperous future. We must be **READY** for the opportunities that present themselves.

This 5 year strategic program, *Focus Forward*, will ensure a community-wide platform of “readiness” around areas of greatest importance and current weakness. Moreover, the Bossier Chamber, which encompasses business, legislative, educational, cultural and other “place” interests, is the natural organization to propose, champion, and coordinate this effort. The proposed initiative is the result of numerous discussions and listening sessions with dozens of community stakeholders.

Program Overview

1. WORKFORCE & EDUCATION

Projected 5-year budget: \$971,500

Business leaders across the state and nation are unanimous in their assertion that education and better-prepared workers are essential to economic development and a community’s ability to compete in the global economy. With new focus and capacity, the Bossier Chamber of Commerce can better leverage our unique position as a twin city organization with influence and connections in both government and business.

“Talent” is increasingly **the** prevailing factor in deciding where companies start-up, expand, or relocate, especially in knowledge-based and other industries we hope to attract and grow in Bossier Parish. We must further improve our schools, encourage educational attainment, increase our supply of skilled workers, and enhance our technical training resources. We must also ensure our capacity to market and communicate our “competitive advantage” in these areas, especially by differentiating Bossier from other communities in the region and state and changing the perceptions and assumptions of both internal and external audiences.

Action Items:

- **Support Elementary programs to improve leadership, pride and growth to the future workforce.**

A concentrated effort to encourage and instill a culture of self-confidence while decreasing discipline issues that will improve academic achievement Focus Forward will introduce a nationally acclaimed program “The Leader in Me[®]” to help better prepare at a young age our future leaders/workforce leadership skills and initiative to prepare them for the decisions of secondary education.

- **Create meaningful business / education partnerships through secondary education. (8-12 programs)**

*A concerted and focused effort will maximize the opportunities for our students to be exposed to the business world and to receive hands on technical training, plan career paths, and develop an entrepreneurial vision. **Focus Forward**, will enhance and expand existing programs such as STEM, DECA, Junior Achievement initiatives, Goodwill Education initiatives and the like, as well as, explore new programs. **Focus Forward** will identify specific businesses in targeted industries to serve as “classrooms / labs” for certain technical programs, until a new high school and/or technical college achieved.*

- **Higher Education programs**

The Bossier Parish Technical School facility in Shreveport is no longer capable of accommodating the needs of Bossier students and residents. A new Bossier campus, with collaborative design and program delivery between Bossier Parish Schools and Bossier Parish Community College, is needed to accommodate both the demand and the specific programming that will better meet the needs of our current and future workers and industries. Programs focused on cyber skills, advanced manufacturing, allied health, and other careers are vital to our future growth and prosperity. This initiative will supply resources, expertise, and coordination to help make the case with lawmakers and others for Bossier’s needs and opportunities.

- ✓ Support expansion of technology programs at Bossier Parish Community College and the development of a Technical School in Bossier Parish to increase dual enrollment in the latter years of high school by 50%.

- **Develop and maintain our own measurements, benchmarks, and communications tools for our K-12 and secondary education systems**

Too often, our association and inclusion in State and Regional rankings and measures creates inaccurate and negative perceptions about our schools, especially among military transfers. Too many positive aspects about our schools, teachers, and families are not being communicated. In order to better match perceptions with reality, we must measure, capture, and communicate our educational assets and achievements so that we are not “defined” by inaccurate and irrelevant data.

2. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT / BUSINESS READY CLIMATE

Projected 5-year budget: \$666,500

Focus Forward will allow the Chamber to create a Business Development Position with dedicated professional staff that will gather and analyze relevant information on the current business climate, direct/manage volunteer committees, coordinate with other organizations, and develop and execute specific strategies around critical issues that dictate and influence the Parish's ability to grow and prosper in a desirable fashion.

Action Items:

- **Accelerate the growth and creation of high wage, high tech, knowledge-based jobs and companies in Bossier Parish.**

Establish a "Knowledge Industry Council" to engage employers, entrepreneurs, and experts for the purpose of identifying impediments and opportunities for technology based growth; promoting collaborative idea sharing and partnerships; and exploring creative solutions to industry needs.

- ✓ Promote the expansion of the National Cyber Research Park and Cyber Innovation Center.
- ✓ Support the expansion of Co-Habitat.

- **Establish a Bossier Natural Resource Council**

Natural gas and other resources promise to bring enormous opportunities for jobs, wealth creation, and other community benefits. But we must also ensure efforts to develop these resources are executed in the long term best interests of the community. The council will focus on easement/lease issues, access to commercial and residential land near drilling areas, financial planning for land owners, impact/transportation fees, and any other issues related to this industry. The council will also focus on Natural Resource business opportunities within the community.

- **Advocate and support the need for a business budget friendly regional airport**

Aggressively engage in a joint community effort to rebrand the Shreveport Regional Airport and help attract a low cost carrier.

- **Advocate/Monitor the expansion of port facilities on the Bossier Side of Red River**

The Shreveport – Bossier Port continues to see record tonnage and business expansion on the Caddo side of the Red River. We will support the current growth and assist in the growth of the Bossier side of the Red River.

- ***Focus Forward* will work to retain and expand existing business.**
 - ✓ Develop a business visitation and outreach program to determine operational needs, opportunities or problems and assist with positive growth and retention solutions.
 - ✓ Develop and encourage worker incentive programs such as tuition rebates, hiring bonuses and referral rewards programs.

3. BARKSDALE AFB

Projected 5-year budget: \$1,404,000

With its annual economic impact of over \$900 million – which may potentially increase to over \$1 billion – Barksdale Air Force Base is undoubtedly vital to our community’s economic future. Its direct, mission related operations and long term viability and effectiveness are indisputably linked to a variety of ***community issues***, which the Chamber and the business community can, and should, influence for the benefit of Barksdale. These issues and impacts include the environment for military retirees and spouses; housing needs; educational excellence; zoning/land use planning; and adequate support businesses. We must work continuously to proactively maintain the security of Barksdale Air Force Base as a continued member and partner of the Bossier Parish Community and region. A top priority of ***Focus Forward*** will be ensuring that Bossier Parish is a welcoming place for the Airmen, civilians, and families of Barksdale, and that the base and surrounding community are able to adapt and change according to the needs of its current and future missions. Additionally, the initiative will pursue strategies and activities that will optimize Barksdale’s impact and value to Bossier Parish by capturing “ancillary growth” related to spouses, retirees, contractors, and suppliers.

Action Items:

- Ensure protection / preservation of surrounding land
- Establish a “job network” to match spouses, dependents, and retirees with local employers
- Work with HBA, Board of Realtors, local developers and officials to provide desired housing options for officers, and retirees
- Create a program to help local companies win procurement contracts
- Work with officials at Barksdale and at DOD to identify opportunities to “shift” supply contracts to local providers
- Work with local health and hospital officials to serve the needs of the men and women of Barksdale Air Force Base.
- Enhance programs to introduce, welcome, and assimilate assigned Airmen and their families
- Aggressively position and market Bossier Parish as prime location for military retirees.

- Ensure mutually beneficial development and transportation infrastructure around the future East Gate.
- Serve as “mediator” to promote constructive dialogue and decision making between Barksdale Forward, Barksdale officials/families and local school boards regarding transfer students, assigned districts, bus routes, and future East Gate school construction efforts, etc.
- Support the Enhancement and growth of the 8th Air Force Museum.

4. BUSINESS ADVOCACY

Projected 5-year budget: \$559,000

Focus Forward will increase the Chamber’s capacity, influence, and expertise for action on infrastructure, transportation, education, and recreation improvements required to support business within the Bossier Parish Region. Program leaders will work with local officials and business leadership to develop and promote a common legislative agenda. We must become the strong voice of business for Bossier Parish, leverage our unique position as the home of Barksdale Air Force Base and the National Cyber Research Park with influence and connections in both governments.

Action Items:

- Work with local government officials to ensure that our policies remain business friendly and enhance the opportunity for continued growth.
- Support and enhance the Chamber’s government relations committee to make annual visits to lobby legislators on state and national issues in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Washington D.C.
- Create an interactive Public Policy website that will communicate the current issues of the business community and allow for the business community to send targeted messages to the legislative officials.
- Support infrastructure issues on a local, regional and national basis.
- Provide support for other local, state and national issues that impact the business community including taxations, quality of life, employment and air quality issues.
- Work with Barksdale Forward, Greater Bossier Economic Development Foundation to advocate for the funding of Barksdale Air Force Base to ensure its longevity in Bossier Parish.

- Establish a meaningful “Opportunity Resource Fund” to enable quick and effective community action on unforeseen strategic issues.

5. BRANDING / MARKETING / IMAGE ENHANCEMENT

Projected 5-year budget: \$840,000

Bossier Parish can benefit greatly by marketing effectively to the outside world i.e., Baton Rouge, within the United States and Globally, the many successes of our community, parish and region. Many of us who live and work in Bossier Parish appreciate our outstanding quality of life and the many assets for economic development that exist. Yet, as many locals experience or visualize the growth of our community, there is much more to attain with an aggressive marketing and public relations program. We can, and must, create an identity and an image that reflects who we are, what we are and where we are going. And we must work effectively to promote that image to both internal and external audiences. A centerpiece of the *Focus Forward* initiative will be a branding effort and marketing strategy designed to “get the word out” to carefully selected targets. Since this is a community-wide need, the Chamber will convene a variety of public, private, and non-profit organizations, institutions, and agencies to develop, market, and promote the Bossier “brand.”

Action Items:

- **Public Relations / Communications**

Begin building national and international awareness of Bossier Parish as a great place to do business and enjoy life by engaging an experienced public relations firm specializing in community press coverage focusing on the community’s attention and energy on the positive aspects of our community, including economic activity, cultural offerings, healthcare services and education to garner widespread coverage.

- ✓ Promote our unique infrastructure of High Technology i.e. the LONI (loop system), the LAMDA Rail
- ✓ Promote our public education (K-12) system. Telling our story of a District Performance Score of 95.6 with a 98.9 exceptional label of teacher certification, plus much more.
- ✓ Promote the recent accolades awarded to Bossier City/Parish; i.e. #3 among Low Cost Manufacturing Centers and #4 in Motion Picture Industry Growth (*Business Facilities Magazine, 2010*) Best Place to Raise Your Kids (*Business Week 2009*), Certified Retirement Community and the like.
- ✓ Promote Bossier City/Parish as it is home to Barksdale Air Force Base, National Cyber Research Park, Bossier Parish Community College (Ranked Top 15 in the U.S., United States Department of Education) and the like.
- ✓ Promote “Quality of Life” – 12 Parks, 5 Play Fields, 2 Hospitals, Schools, Etc.

- **Investor Relations**

The Focus Forward initiative's success will depend on active engagement and participation among its investors and stakeholders. Accordingly, program leaders will ensure frequent communications and opportunities for interaction with program activities. Most importantly, volunteer leaders will hold the initiative accountable for results, effectiveness, and transparency.

- ✓ Offer timely notification to investors of businesses moving into the area
- ✓ Provide regular communication with investors through a quarterly newsletter and other means
- ✓ List investors (and hot links to the web sites) on our web site
- ✓ Hold an annual meeting of investors to review our goals, objective and accomplishments

TOTAL PROJECTED 5-YEAR COST OF *Focus Forward* \$4.4 million

Goals & Objectives

Many of the outcomes and impacts of Focus Forward's implementation will be subjective and long term. However, in order to deliver a tangible return on the community's investment and in order to measure progress and success, program leaders have established relevant performance metrics, to be tracked and achieved within the program's five-year implementation period.

Conclusion / Call to Action

The next five to ten years are likely to determine the course and trajectory of Bossier Parish's economic future. There is little doubt that our future will be better than our past. But how much better is an unknown, as is the quality and sustainability of coming growth and development. We can, and should, influence our own destiny. Regionalism is important and we endorse and support the various efforts and organizations focused on regional issues, but Bossier's *specific needs*, opportunities, and challenges cannot be entrusted to plans and visions that are not "Bossier-centric."

- **2000 New Jobs**
- **10% increase in Bossier Parish Average Wage Rate**
- **Increase employment in technology industries by 20%**
- **Increase number of residents with high school diploma or higher education by 15%**
- **Increase Bossier Parish' annual total payroll by \$100 million**
- **500,000 square feet in new commercial space (office, retail, industrial)**

The proposed *Focus Forward* initiative puts Bossier's interests first, but it does so without jeopardizing or conflicting with broader regional efforts. Equally important is the Chamber's intention and commitment to avoid duplication and redundancy with other organizations and agencies in Bossier Parish. Several ideas and suggestions during the plan's development were purposely excluded to prevent encroachment into the missions and activities of existing organizations. And, where appropriate, the Chamber will collaborate and coordinate with GBEDF, the Shreveport Chamber, City and Parish governments, and others to ensure efficient, effective delivery of the plan's goals and objectives.

The Bossier Chamber's leaders and stakeholders are ready and willing to assume an aggressive, proactive role and to exert needed influence over our community's readiness for desired growth and prosperity. We believe *the Focus Forward* initiative represents the right strategies, and that it is absolutely necessary at this critical time in our community's history. But executing it to achieve the desired outcomes will require broad community support and additional resources. We intend to launch a multi-year campaign to fund its implementation, once we have received additional feedback and input regarding its strategies and tactics. Like other successful communities that have launched similar forward thinking efforts, we anticipate those with a vested interest and stake in our economic vitality and quality of life – both public and private – will be encouraged to provide leadership, as well as fair and proportionate financial investments. Those investments will be among the most important that have been made in our community in recent memory, and will generate enormous returns for many years into the future.

EXHIBIT C – PRE-INTERVIEW LETTER

2011 Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Tommy Clark – Chairman

Clark & Associates

Kara Lowrie – Chair Elect

Acadiana Mortgage

Jason Smith – Finance Chair

Citizens National Bank

Hedy Hebert – Past Chair

Benefit Consulting

Sandy Cimino

Ouachita Independent Bank

Business Development Chair

Emile Cordaro

AEP SWPECO

Energy Chair

Randy Doss

A-1 Charter Services

Membership Development Chair

Jim Henderson

Bossier Parish Community College

Government Relations Chair

Sarle Joubert

Chesapeake Energy

Education Chair

Terri Mathews

Gumbaux Productions

Marketing Chair

Catherine Vanderberry

Community Volunteer

Military Relations Chair

Jeff Thompson

Attorney At Law

Greater Bossier Economic

Development Foundation

Directors:

Lori Cheramie

AT & T

Lisa Janes

TownSquare Media

Joyce Jeffrey

Summit Executive Realty

Emily Leahy

Heard, McElroy & Vestal

Rhonda Maclaasac

Willis Knighton Health Systems

Meredith McLellan

University of Pheonix

Michael Rich

Horseshoe Casino & Hotel

Jack Skaggs

Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers

Dana Smelser

Christus Health

David Specht Jr.

Bossier Press Tribune

Craig Spohn



Date

Name

Title

Company

Address

City, ST ZIP

Dear _____:

Like everyone with a stake in Bossier Parish's economic health and vitality, you are no doubt aware of the unprecedented opportunities, as well as challenges, facing our community. But have you thought about what we, as a community, can and should be doing to ensure we maximize those opportunities? The Bossier Chamber has not only thought about it – we have developed a bold action plan designed to enhance our economic competitiveness and to increase prosperity for our businesses and residents.

_____ is a proposed five-year initiative with strategies focused on the most critical elements of our current and future prosperity: Workforce & Education; Business Development; Barksdale AFB; Community Image/Branding/ Marketing; and Business Advocacy. Many Chamber and community leaders have worked to develop this plan and share the belief that it is the "right plan at the right time" for Bossier Parish. But before we can begin to implement and execute this initiative, we need to determine likely levels of support and enthusiasm from the community, and gather useful feedback and input for its refinement and improvement. To that end, we have retained National Community Development Services (NCDS) to conduct a feasibility analysis and goal assessment. A key part of their assignment will be to conduct *confidential* interviews with our top business leaders and stakeholders. We are writing to request your participation in that process. NCDS will be seeking information, insight, and opinions. *They will not be asking for money.*

Someone from the Chamber staff will be calling to arrange a convenient time for a 45 minute meeting with a representative from NCDS. We encourage you to make yourself available, and to be candid and forthright in your discussion. Please also review the attached *Discussion Draft* before your meeting.

Thank you in advance for your accommodation of this important request. Your thoughts and ideas will help us move forward and ensure that this new initiative will benefit everyone with an interest in Bossier Parish's economic future.

Sincerely,

Tommy Clark
Board Chair
Clark & Associates

Kara Lowrie
Chair Elect
Acadiana Mortgage

Jason Smith
Finance Chair
Citizens National
Bank

Lisa Johnson
President
Bossier Chamber of
Commerce

EXHIBIT D - QUESTIONNAIRE

**CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR NCDS INTERNAL USE ONLY**
Bossier Chamber of Commerce

Appt. Date: _____
Appt. Time: _____

Interviewer(s): _____
Interview #: _____

Interviewee Information (TO BE COMPLETED BY Bossier Chamber STAFF / VOLUNTEERS):

Name: _____ Title: _____

Firm: _____ Ph: _____

Client Board Member? Yes No

Industry Type: _____ (If known)

Current or Past Financial Support: Yes: No: Amount: _____

Address of Firm / Organization: (Driving Directions – Include as a separate attachment)

Background Notes / Helpful Information:

Interviewer's Assessment (NCDS):

Interviewee Attitude: Highly committed
 Positive
 Moderate
 Noncommittal
 Negative

Financial Indication:

Low \$ _____ High \$ _____

Critical Notes:

Leadership Role: Yes Maybe No
Door Opener: Yes Maybe No

Projected Campaign Role / Comments:

General Chair

Cabinet Co-Chair

Division Chair

Program Refinement Chair

Communications Committee Chair

Evaluations Committee Chair

**(BEGIN INTERVIEW WITH CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT &
PURPOSE OF INTERVIEW)**

Introduction

1. How much do you know about why we're here today?

2. Are you a Board Member of the Chamber? What has your interaction been with the Bossier Chamber over the years?

_____ Yes _____ No

Local Economy / Assessment of the Need

2. How would you characterize Bossier's / NW Louisiana's current economic climate?

_____ Excellent _____ Good _____ Fair _____ Poor

3. How would you characterize the climate as compared to five years ago? (What is the trend?)

_____ Better _____ Worse _____ Same

4. Is there a need to accelerate the pace of economic growth in Bossier Parish?

_____ Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No

5. If you could make one change in the community—TODAY—what would it be?

6. What are Bossier Parish's greatest strengths / assets for economic growth?

7. What are the greatest weaknesses / obstacles to growth?

Interviewee's Company / Organization

8. How would you characterize your company's / organization's performance over the past five years?

___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor

9. How do you view your company's STAKE in Bossier's economic growth? In other words, what is your interest? Why might you care to see a successful economic competitiveness initiative implemented? (VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION!)

Assessment of the Bossier Chamber of Commerce

10. How would you rate the COLLECTIVE economic growth and development efforts in the Bossier / NW LA over the past five years? – ***And who or what do you perceive to be primarily responsible (good or bad)?***

___ Very Effective ___ Moderately Effective ___ Ineffective ___ Unsure

11. How would you rate the effectiveness of the Bossier Chamber in contributing to economic growth?

___ Very Effective ___ Moderately Effective ___ Ineffective ___ Unsure

12. What specific programs or accomplishments (if any) stand out in your mind over the last several years?

13. Specifically, how would you rate the effectiveness of the Bossier Chamber's staff?

___ Very Effective ___ Moderately Effective ___ Ineffective ___ Unsure

14. How would you rate the effectiveness of the Bossier Chamber's Board of Directors?

___ Very Effective ___ Moderately Effective ___ Ineffective ___ Unsure

15. Do you feel your business/industry has realized tangible benefits as a result of the Bossier Chamber's efforts?

____ Yes ____ No ____ Unsure

16. How do you view the Bossier Chamber, relative to Shreveport Chamber, Bossier Economic Development Foundation, North LA Economic Development Foundation, and other community and economic development organizations?

Assessment of the Plan

(Present the Prospectus, answer questions and provide additional information as necessary.)

17. Have you received the Prospectus and have you had an opportunity to review it?

_____ Yes _____ No

18. As you can see, "Focus Forward" has five critical steps/strategies. Please take a moment to review the steps, as well as the tactics and costs of each, and indicate the degree of importance to you:

	Important Must Do	Somewhat Important	Low Priority	No Opinion
Step 1: Workforce & Education	_____	_____	_____	_____
Comment:				

Strategy 2: Business Development / Business Ready Climate	_____	_____	_____	_____
Comment:				

	Important Must Do	Somewhat Important	Low Priority	No Opinion
Strategy 3: Barksdale AFB	_____	_____	_____	_____
Comment:				

Strategy 4: Business Advocacy

Comment:

Strategy 5: Branding/Marketing/Image Enhancement

Comment:

19. What is your overall assessment of the proposed Initiative?

___ Exactly What's Needed ___ Largely On Target, Needs Refinement ___ A First Step ___ Way Off Base

Comment on "Measures of Success":

20. What changes or modifications to the Initiative would you like to see?

Funding the Project

21. The proposed program of work requires a five-year, \$4.4 million (\$880K / year) investment from Bossier area investors. Do you feel this funding goal is achievable?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Unsure

b. If no, what goal could be attained for this project? _____

22. **(Present Investment Range Table)** Experience shows that the following investment levels are necessary to reach this \$ 4.4 million goal. Which businesses, individuals, foundations, or other organizations do you feel would give consideration to making the top leadership commitments?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

23. Keeping in mind that this is not a solicitation and you are not making a commitment here, **at what level would you (or your corporation / organization / foundation) consider making a five-year investment in the project** if it is to your liking and the right people are leading it?

Low \$_____ High \$_____

a. Are there any changes or any set of circumstances that might influence a larger investment from you / your firm? **(VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION!)**

b. Have current ECONOMIC CONDITIONS had a positive, negative, or neutral effect on your \$ indication / projection? **(Note: 1st payment not due until ____?)**

____ Positive ____ Negative ____ Neutral

c. Is there anything else the Chamber should know prior to presenting you / your organization with a funding request?

- Budgetary timeline?
- How quickly a decision would be made?
- Info regarding how the decision will be made?
- Specific presentation or information requirements?

24. GOVERNANCE: Who should be responsible for oversight & governance:
Chamber Board? _____ “Investors Council”? _____

Other _____

Competing Campaigns

25. Are you aware of any competing campaigns (in progress, just completed, or pending) that might affect the level of support this project might receive?

<u>Names of campaign</u>	<u>Goal</u>
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____

26. How would YOU prioritize the importance of a Chamber Economic Competitiveness campaign in relation to other major campaigns of which you are aware?

_____ More important _____ About the same _____ Less important

Possible Leadership

27. Whose names come to mind as those who must be out front and visible to get your / your organization’s attention and ensure that the campaign is a success?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

28. Of those, who would make the most effective Campaign General Chairman?

29. Interviewee's leadership:

a. Have you personally ever participated in an effort of this nature and, if so, in what capacity?

_____Yes _____No

b. What other non-profit or for-profit board commitments do you have?

c. If asked, would you consider playing a leadership role in a campaign?

_____Yes _____No _____Maybe

d. Would you consider being a door opener?

_____Yes _____No _____Maybe

e. Do you have any special resources, skills, or talents, that you would consider investing in the campaign—such as communications media (radio, TV, billboards), living quarters, cars, advertising space, public relations skills, administrative support / supplies, etc.?

Final Thoughts

30. Emphasizing again that our discussion is strictly confidential, are there any other factors that you feel might influence the outcome of the campaign?

THANK YOU!!

End time _____

EXHIBIT E – INTERVIEWEE LIST

The Bossier Chamber of Commerce Initiative

Focus Forward

46 Persons Interviewed

Bill Altimus Bossier Parish Police Jury Parish Administrator	David Alvis Owner Texas Steak House	William L. Bailey President/CEO Alliance Inc.
Lou Chandler Jr. Owner Lou Chandler Inc.	Thomas M. Clark Relationship Dev. Clark & Assoc., LLC	Emile B. Cordaro Mng, Gov. Affairs AEP Swepco
James L. Dean VP & General Mngr Cellxion	John W. Dean Partner, Heard McElroy & Vestal	Caldwell Dunn Agent State Farm
James K. Elrod CEO Willis-Knighton	George P. Fritze Dealer Red River Motor Co.	Lance George General Manager Boomtown Casino
Hedy S. Hebert CSA, RHU Benefit Consulting Srv	Jim Henderson Chancellor Bossier Parish CC	Paula Hickman Community Foundation
Rick Holland VP Bossier City & Shreveport Market Gibsland Bank & Trust	Gary W. Hubbard Hubbard Investments	Sarie N. Joubert Mng, Public Affairs Chesapeake Energy
Joyce C. Jeffrey Broker/Realtor Summit Executive Realty	Bobby E. Jelks President Franks Mngt Co.	Jim Johnson Owner Johnson's Furniture
Don E. Jones Owner Jones Environmental	Walter Lamb President, NW Div. Ouachita Indep. Bank	Greg Lott President, Bossier Shreveport Market Progressive Bank

Kara B. Lowrie President Acadiana Mortgage	William Lunn, MD COO Christus Schumpert	D.C.Machen, Jr. Superintendent Bossier Parish Schools
Ian McElroy President McElroy Metal	John Michael Moore Vice President BancorpSouth	Loy Beene Moore General Manager Beene Office Park, LLC
Mike Rich Sr. VP and GM Harrahs Horseshoe Bossier City	Robert R. Robinson Owner R.R.Robinson Enterp.	Rocky Rockett President BPEDF
Denny Rogers Managing Partner Landers Dodge	J.Kent Rogers Executive Director NW La Council of Gov.	John F. "Jack" Sharp President & CEO Biomedical Res. Found.
Jason D. Smith, CPA Executive VP Citizens National Bank	Craig Spohn Exec. Dir./President Cyber Innov. Center	Rod Taylor President/CEO Barksdale Fed Cr. Union
Jeff R. Thompson Attorney At Law	Harold W. Turner President, Shreveport Red River Bank	Murray W. Viser President/COO Barksdale Forward
Lorenz "Lo" Walker Mayor City of Bossier City, LA	Matt Wallace VP, Marketing Venyu	Jeff Wyatt Realtor Diamond Realty Grp
John Good, Jr. Founder and Principal The Good Companies	Neal Pounders Developer	

EXHIBIT F – INVESTMENT RANGE TABLE

Minimum Investment Levels Necessary to Guarantee

A Campaign Goal of \$4.4 Million

<-----Cumulative----->

Five-Year Pledge	Annual Pledge	No. of Pledges at this Level	\$ Amount this Level	No. of Pledges	Pledge Total
\$500,000	\$100,000	1	\$500,000	1	\$500,000
\$300,000	\$60,000	1	\$300,000	2	\$800,000
\$250,000	\$50,000	2	\$500,000	4	\$1,300,000
\$150,000	\$30,000	4	\$600,000	8	\$1,900,000
\$100,000	\$20,000	4	\$400,000	12	\$2,300,000
\$75,000	\$15,000	8	\$600,000	20	\$2,900,000
\$50,000	\$10,000	12	\$600,000	32	\$3,500,000
\$25,000	\$5,000	20	\$500,000	52	\$4,000,000
\$10,000	\$2,000	24	\$240,000	76	\$4,240,000
\$5,000	\$1,000	32	\$160,000	108	\$4,400,000