

Headline: New business group formed
Date: 7/11/2010 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact:
Media Outlet: Slidell Sentry-News
Attachment Link: <http://www.slidellsentry.com/articles/2010/07/09/news/doc4c2e74f244208614412176.txt>

A group of business leaders, the St. Tammany Economic Partnership, have now met for the third time to discuss how they can unify their organizations to help market St. Tammany Parish for future economic development opportunities.

Spearheaded by **Marty Mayer, CEO of Stirling Properties** and recent past chairman of the board of both GNO, Inc. and the St. Tammany West Chamber; Michele Avery, the current chairman of the St. Tammany West Chamber; and Jan Robert, former Covington Downtown Development Director, Workforce Development Director, and current Director of the St. Tammany Healthcare Alliance, together with other business leaders, met to discuss how other successful economic development and business organizations work together in Louisiana. Also participating is Northshore Business Council, East St. Tammany Chamber of Commerce, St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission, St. Tammany Economic Development Foundation and Northshore Community Foundation.

Thus far, the group held an initial meeting and shared thoughts and ideas. This was followed by a visit from the executive director of Jefferson Economic Development Corp., Lucien Gunter.

Pictured are representatives of Old Mandeville Business Association, Covington Business Association and the St. Tammany West Chamber. Standing, from left are Rick Dennie, Denis Bechac, Mike Waller, Mike Dugger and Richard Muller. Sitting, from left are Jan Robert, David Barfield, Cliff Bergeron and Lacey Toledano. Not pictured is Michelle Stegall.

Adam Knapp, the CEO of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, joined the group at its June meeting. Both Gunter and Knapp said the foundations of its organizations and the obstacles they overcame to bring together a unified group of public and private partners to help finance their organizations and reap successful results in recruiting viable new businesses, create high-paying jobs and have an overall tremendous impact on the economy of their parishes.