

@ Health & Well-Being ISSUE

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FOCUS: CENLA ADVANTAGE PARTNERSHIP

A CAPITAL Plan



Duplantis Gerard (Cleco employee) restores service to a customer on Rigolette Road.

2005

is the year Cenla Advantage Partnership (CAP) moves from concept to reality. "CAP is now underway," says Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation.

"Grant seekers were showing an increased interest in economic development. The Foundation, wanting to be proactive in its funding efforts, set up a conference to discuss economic development challenges in Central Louisiana," observes Rosier.

"CAP has evolved surely and systematically into this private regional nonprofit economic development organization. We think it's going to be a winner."

"It's a terrific project," agrees Allen Smart, The Rapides Foundation's Vice President of Programs. "We've spent well over a year developing CAP. It's been through many stages, and is now ready to begin living its mission."

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Cenla Advantage Partnership (CAP)

A CAPital Plan

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The Foundation's mission is to improve community health in Central Louisiana, Foundation research shows a strong economy leads to healthier communities. This is the reason the Foundation spearheaded efforts to create CAP.

CAP's mission is to coordinate and leverage the area's resources to stimulate growth for existing businesses, as well as provide infrastructure and human capital in order to induce outside companies to locate in Central Louisiana. "The majority of jobs are created by existing businesses," says Smart, "so we naturally want to help them as much as possible grow their way to prosperity. But we also need to make ourselves attractive to outside businesses, recognize what we have, and what we need to bring in new business. It will take all these elements for true economic development."

CAP will also address employers' concerns for a skilled workforce. The Rapides Foundation's Board Chairman, Regionald Seastrunk is an Equal Employment Opportunity Manager at Fort Polk. He has 30 years of experience in Louisiana's employment trends and problems. "I'm very interested in CAP because we still have some employment issues, and we have skills-training and development issues with regards to ensuring we've got a workforce that's fully prepared and engaged to meet the needs of employers of the future. I think that's why it's important employers play a major part in CAP, because who knows better what their employee or workforce needs are than the ones that are doing the employing?"

Cenla Advantage Partnership is set up as a regional independent organization with no political or public ties, although it plans to coordinate its activities with those of other economic and workforce development entities,

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“Economic Development works the best when the state and regional partners cooperate to pursue business. The Governor and Louisiana Economic Development are placing a priority on building good relationships with organizations like Cenla Advantage Partnership. We are looking forward to working together and building on the momentum of the successes of Union Tank Car, General Motors, and Roy O. Martin, just to name a few.”

Michael Olivier, Secretary of Louisiana Economic Development

Cenla Advantage Partnership (CAP)

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and work hand-in-hand with the public sector to get things done.

CAP will be run by the private sector individuals and businesses that are investing in it. Seastrunk believes these private investors will ensure success. "Private sector employers are willing to invest their money, their time, their effort. The Rapides Foundation believes that's going to be the standard for success, because they have a vested interest. They have put up their financial and human resources to make this initiative work and our role primarily should be to facilitate that."

The nine-member Steering Committee (see pages 8-9) that was formed to get CAP up and running has almost completed its task. One of the committee's last assignments is to name an inaugural private sector board to oversee CAP. This board, according to Joe Rosier will reflect a nine-parish service area. "We want to make sure that the CAP Board is diverse in both race and gender, as well as geographically representative."

One of the first duties of the new board will be to find a CEO to lead CAP, and three additional staff members. "The search for the right person to head CAP is vitally important," says Rosier.

"The investors understand this and will make a thorough regional, state and national search for the most qualified person."

It's all coming together. "The private sector businesses and individuals have come together and formed the first regional economic development group of its kind in the state with almost \$800,000 dollars of their own capital. The Foundation is matching their investments on a \$1 to \$1 basis up to \$1.5 million over three years to see CAP become a major economic player in the region," says Smart. "It has the potential to produce larger numbers of higher paying jobs, and generate more wealth for the many communities in our area. CAP will create economic opportunity for all citizens of Central Louisiana."

Regional Seastrunk is filled with optimism for CAP's success. "We've had consultants come in and look at this and we know in other parts of the country it has worked. Now, will it work in our region? I happen to believe that it will. I see a bright future, and I want to commend the employers and all those who have willingly accepted this challenge."

It's a "CAP"ital idea whose time has come.

"I'm extremely excited about this organization and its commitment to support regional economic development efforts for Central Louisiana. Our newly created economic development board in Avoyelles parish looks forward to working with CAP, as we share resources, build coalitions, and move forward with determination to improve the quality of life for our residents.

One of the things that impresses me about CAP is The Rapides Foundation's understanding and appreciation of the talent and successes of the private business sector. Giving this organization a voice and the authority to drive economic development efforts in Central Louisiana will be a key factor in achieving their goals."

Monica Walker, State Representative

Cenla Advantage Partnership (CAP)

Our Story



Richard Poche oversees a packaging line at the Procter & Gamble Plant in Pineville, LA.

to think regional. "There was a growing recognition that we need to organize at the regional level where the market is if we're going to try to create better jobs in Cenla," said Williams.

Regional Technology Strategies got to work. They researched regional economic groups across the country and were surprised to be able to easily identify over 140 of them. Williams was astounded; "What's going on nationally! Ten years ago you would have had to beat the bushes to find these guys."

His organization further researched these national examples and interviewed the leadership of about 20 of them. "What we found," Williams reported, "was this growing recognition that communities needed to formally band together

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"The Rapides Foundation was approached by several groups of people who had independently been meeting, and who wanted to explore opportunities to strengthen and expand economic development in Central Louisiana," said Trent Williams, a Principal of Regional Technology Strategies, Inc. and consultant to The Rapides Foundation. "There was a sense we could take a more expansive approach. We need to find some way to develop a consensus about what the issues are and what we're going to do about them."

The Rapides Foundation responded with "Common Ground, Higher Ground," a meeting held in April of 2003 to discuss the economic development challenges in Cenla and the need



Wendell Fauntleroy (Cleco employee) restores service to a Hineston customer.

Begins

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since they're all part of a regional economy, to extend their resources and extend their reach."

In addition to this research, a series of extensive, highly structured interviews were conducted with community leaders in Central Louisiana. From there, "We distilled what our issues are, what our assets are and what our consensus is about what we can do about them," said Williams.

These interviews were also of particular interest to Jim Clinton, Executive Director of the Southern Growth Policies Board and consultant to The Rapides Foundation as well. "From my viewpoint the more interesting work was when we got into the interview process. The process was unusual and very rewarding," said Clinton, "and I think it really helped put the Foundation in a position to develop a structure that would be very useful and would garner widespread support."

The series of interviews were a major factor in the formation of Cenla Advantage Partnership (CAP). "I think the design of CAP around the results of those interviews so that it is directly responsive to the concerns of leaders in Central Louisiana, gives it a chance to be particularly successful," said Clinton.

He also believes CAP will be successful because of the strong commitment to economic development. "I think just having the long term commitment to building economic opportunity in the broadest sense - building from within, taking advantage of strengths that exist in the economy, focusing on building from an existing base, supporting entrepreneurs, and not limiting efforts to industrial recruitment - really gives Central Louisiana a chance to grow in ways that it otherwise wouldn't have grown."



Martco's plywood plant in Chopin, LA.

With the research and interviews completed, it was time for the next step. Trent Williams picks up the story. "So, out of that initiative came the first design for our regional economic development organization, which was offered back to the community in another public meeting. And from there the Steering Committee was formed, and they refined the initial design."

Now the Steering Committee is wrapping up its work and CAP is ready to begin building even greater economic opportunities for our area. Jim Clinton looks back at the work with satisfaction. "CAP wasn't built by just hiring some outside experts and then saying, 'Tell us what to do.' It was built by listening carefully and exhaustively to people in Central Louisiana. I think it works because it's what people said they wanted."

A story with a happy ending, or really, a happy and hopeful beginning.

Cenla Advantage Partnership (CAP)

The Entrepreneurs' Game Plan

By Gregg A. Lichtenstein

On November 9th, The Rapides Foundation invited Gregg A. Lichtenstein, a nationally known specialist in entrepreneurship, to share with more than 45 Central Louisiana entrepreneurs and service providers an innovative approach to developing entrepreneurial talent, creating successful companies and building entrepreneurial communities that he has been implementing in various parts of the world. Called the **Entrepreneurial League System®** (ELS), it is modeled after one of the most successful processes in the world for systematically developing talent – the farm system of professional sports.

The mission of the Entrepreneurial League System® is to create a supply of highly skilled entrepreneurs capable of building successful companies and to do so in *sufficient* numbers to

transform a region's economy and create individual as well as community wealth. The ELS establishes a breeding ground for entrepreneurs and helps them build the skills necessary for success as they work their way up the various league levels, just as athletes do in baseball. Current programs in enterprise development only deal with half of the equation for economic success; they address the needs firms have for technical and financial assistance but do little to build a pipeline of highly skilled entrepreneurs capable of using that assistance effectively to build companies.

The Entrepreneurial League System® classifies entrepreneurs into different "league" levels according to their skills in starting and operating a new enterprise – Rookie, Single A, Double and Triple A. Entrepreneurs are recruited by Talent

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“The new beginning of CAP will be a tremendous asset not only for providing direction but also for a source of information. Many entrepreneurs like me find it uncomfortable not having a sounding board at our disposal and CAP will very definitely fill this void.”

Michael L. Jenkins, Downtown Developer, Alexandria, LA

Cenla Advantage Partnership (CAP)

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Scouts who use a variety of methods to find or encourage individuals with the potential and drive to become an entrepreneur. Led by a Performance Coach, entrepreneurs at the same skill level are organized into Success Teams to develop the skills necessary to be successful entrepreneurs and to support each other in the tasks needed to build their businesses. With the help of their coach, entrepreneurs establish individualized “game plans” that help them focus their energies on reaching their goals. Consulting services, technical assistance, and financial assistance are customized and delivered according to the entrepreneurs’ level of skill and their precise need. These processes facilitate the entrepreneurs’ progress up the “ladder” to the major leagues – not in terms of size but in terms of performance and profitability.

Participating service providers are organized into a coordinated system that improves entrepreneurs’ ability to quickly and easily get the right kind of help at the right time and the right price. The system also includes an innovative market development service led by individuals known as Opportunity Scouts, whose function is to actively identify new market opportunities and link them to existing and prospective entrepreneurs.

The response to this approach by both entrepreneurs and service providers was extremely positive; they expressed the view that the system provides a powerful and missing link that would complement existing activities. The Foundation is now exploring how to adapt this system to the unique conditions of the Cenla region and developing a plan for implementation. There will be more news about the Entrepreneurial League System® in the next couple of months.

“There is an untapped capacity for entrepreneurship and business growth in Central Louisiana. Our objective is to convert this potential to good jobs and viable businesses. The Rapides Foundation support allows us to open an Alexandria office that will provide financing and technical assistance that helps entrepreneurs succeed and helps the region prosper.”

ECD/HOPE is a community development financial institution that leverages private, public and philanthropic resources to tackle the development hurdles facing low-income communities, such as jobs, housing and healthcare. Since 1994 ECD/HOPE has generated over \$150 million in financing for entrepreneurs, homebuyers and community development projects, and directly benefited more than 10,000 individuals.

*Bill Bynum,
Enterprise Corporation of the Delta/HOPE's CEO*

Cenla Advantage Partnership (CAP)

Steering Toward **Econom**

The CAP Steering Committee



(Left to right) Jeffrey Garrison, M.D., Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Specialists; Jennifer Stevens, Representative, GEICO Direct; Curman Gaines, Executive Director, Central Louisiana Business Incubator; and Committee Chairman Rod Noles, President, Noles-Frye Realty.

ic Prosperity

Rod Noles, President and CEO of Noles-Frye Realty Inc., is chairman of the nine-member Steering Committee for Cenla Advantage Partnership. He took on the challenge of leading this group to set up the nuts and bolts of this new economic development entity because he firmly believes we must take advantage of both this moment in time and Central Louisiana's existing infrastructure which includes an airport, a navigable river, railway lines, an interstate highway, forest products and available water.

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(Left to right) Roy O. Martin, III, President and CFO, Roy O. Martin Lumber Company, LLC; Todd Hoffman, Plant Leader, Procter & Gamble; Kelly Rush Williams, President/CEO, The Rush Companies; Mike Madison, President and CEO, Cleco Power; and Kathy Sellers Johnson, Owner, The Sellers Group.

Cenla Advantage Partnership (CAP)

Steering Toward **Economic Prosperity**

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"So, here we are with wonderful infrastructure and we're not on fire," lamented Noles. "It's like, 'Alright boys and girls, we're all dressed up and there's no party to go to.' Well now we're looking for an invite," said Noles with determination.

"And the timing is perfect," he continued. "The timing is at a point where everybody is excited about the rumble we have going on," he said, referring to the economic development projects that have been announced recently in this area; projects such as Union Tank Car locating here, Procter & Gamble expanding, Roy O. Martin Lumber Company opening up a new facility north of Oakdale, a new airport terminal, and the Pollock federal prison expansion.

To achieve their purpose, the CAP Steering Committee was divided into two Subcommittees: Governance and Development. The Governance Subcommittee set up the structure of the organization; making decisions on such subjects as the CAP mission, size of the board, eligibility for membership, staffing requirements, etc. Meanwhile, the Development Subcommittee went out to sell the CAP idea.

"My role as chairman has been to be the leader of fundraising. I'm raising money for deals all the time in my business and I'm pretty good at it," Noles noted. "I've been out there 'dialing for dollars.'" So far, CAP has raised up to \$260,000 in annual commitments for each of the next three years which The Rapides Foundation will match. Noles hopes to increase that investment by private investors to more than \$500,000.

Mike Madison, President and CEO of Cleco

Power, which services roughly 270,000 customers, agreed to be on the Steering Committee because his company is a big supporter of CAP. "Cleco Corporation has committed to CAP in a large way. We've donated \$40,000 over three years, or \$120,000."

The reason, according to Madison, is that Cleco embraces the CAP concept of economically growing your own area. "The only way our base core business grew was if the service territory we served grew. So utilities have long been a part of economic development in the states in which they operate, because that's how we grow."

Procter & Gamble (P&G) is also an investor in CAP. P&G Plant Manager Todd Hoffman is on the Steering Committee. "As I was leading our expansion here, I saw the need for something in addition to the current organizations that exist out there for economic development. Procter & Gamble can benefit from having the CAP organization up and running."

Hoffman is on the Governance Subcommittee. "For me, the hallmark of this effort for the past year is that there has been almost complete alignment on the need in the structure from Day One. So, there's a group of pretty influential people from different backgrounds that are all driving towards a solution that makes sense to them."

Kathy Sellers Johnson owns a consulting firm. She agreed to be on the Steering Committee after "sitting in on some of the early group meetings with the consultant," said Sellers Johnson. "I thought it was something we definitely

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CAP

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had a need for in Central Louisiana and something I could make a commitment to. I've also had a good bit of experience with starting up an organization."

In her occupation as a public relations and marketing consultant, she has worked alongside members of other economic groups in our area. There are 35 economic development groups of varying degrees in Central Louisiana. It is Sellers Johnson's hope that CAP will help them. "In addition to the other good work that I would see CAP doing, I would hope that ultimately CAP would be used as a resource by these other organizations to meet the needs of the businesses and industries that are located throughout our region. CAP could be the umbrella organization that could help bring these people all together."

In Allen Parish, Kelly Rush Williams, President and CEO of The Rush Companies jumped at the chance to be on the Steering Committee. "I'm so excited that I'm serving because I represent Allen Parish and we want to be a part of any economic development in Central Louisiana. And they included us so well."

Rush Williams says she developed personal relationships by serving on the Steering Committee. "We've worked so hard together and so much together over the past year that we've become very close friends besides business colleagues," said Rush Williams. "I've enjoyed getting to know them. I've enjoyed working with them because they're just like me; they all share a vision for how important economic

development is for our region. It's been a wonderful experience."

As a member of the medical profession, Dr. Jeffrey Garrison of Orthopaedic & Sports Medicine Specialists, joined the Steering Committee because he thinks economic development can lead to better education and a better quality of life. "When you talk about stimulating business development and economic growth there's kind of an indirect phenomenon," he said. "When you get a major industry coming into the area and skilled jobs occurring, there is also stimulation for improvements in education. That will improve the quality of living in general among the population. And as education improves, I think people's health awareness improves." Dr. Garrison summed it up by saying, "I just think people are going to definitely benefit across the board when things improve economically."

It's been a long haul, but the Steering Committee's mission is almost complete. Their last assignment is to name a board to run CAP. Steering Committee Chairman Rod Noles says when its work is done, "the CAP Board will then run that business venture and I'll simply be an investor, holding them accountable for great things."

The Steering Committee achieved a mammoth task. They have given CAP a form and an existence all its own. We thank them and in time we believe the entire region will as well.

Cenla Advantage Partnership (CAP)

Individual Investors:

Dr. & Mrs. Paul M. Davis, Jr.
Anne Fitzgerald
Greg Gormanous
Joy Hodges
Kathy Sellers Johnson
Patrick & Randalle Moore

Company Investors:

A Rental Gallery
Ballard & Associates
Bank One
Central Management Company, LLC
CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital
Cleco Corporation
Coldwell Banker White Real Estate
Country Living Mobile Homes
GEICO Direct, Leesville
Gilchrist Construction Company, LLC
Hibernia National Bank
International Paper
Keller Enterprises
Kilpatrick Life Insurance Company
Kinetix Broadband
Lance Harris Companies
Louisiana Machinery Company, LLC
Louisiana Physical Therapy Centers
Merchants & Farmers Bank & Trust, Leesville
Morris Insurance Agency, Inc., Leesville
Noble Flight
Noles-Frye Realty
Orthopaedic & Sports Medicine Specialists

Pan American Engineers
Percy, Smith & Foote, LLP
Petron, Inc.
Phoenix Family Pharmacy, Leesville
Procter & Gamble
Rapides Regional Medical Center
Ratcliff Construction Co., LLC
Red River Bank
Roy O. Martin Lumber Co. LLC / Martco LP
Scallan Construction
The Rush Companies
The Town Talk
Tudor Companies
Walker Automotive



Cenla Advantage Partnership (CAP)

A Sound Investment



Red River Bank President and CEO Blake Chatelain, with Jane Long, teller, at their main banking center on Jackson Street extension.

Why are businessmen in Central Louisiana investing in Cenla Advantage Partnership?

"We are in a unique position today to really leverage off of the efforts that are going on with the state of Louisiana," says Blake Chatelain, President and CEO of Red River Bank. Red River Bank has invested \$10,000 per year over the next three years in the CAP initiative. "The Governor is very focused on economic development. I think it's a great time for us to pull together all the parishes of Central Louisiana and make a concerted effort on building out the opportunities here in our area."

For Lance Harris, President and CEO of Lance Harris Companies (Leebo's Stores, Inc., Woodside Pecan and Cattle Plantation, Alexandria Farm Supply Services, and Rooster's Town and Country) investing \$25,000 per year over the next three years in CAP was a personal decision. "My wife and I believe you've got to give back to the community that's blessed you so well. In this case, it was something we discussed and thought it was a good investment because ultimately we hope that it will foster economic growth which in turn makes the quality of life go up for everybody. Secondly, it helps me achieve my

personal goal to offer as many good jobs to as many people as possible, profitably. So if the economic situation in Rapides Parish continues to be on the positive side, then it offers me an opportunity to grow my company and my businesses as the economy grows."

Buddy Tudor, President and CEO of Tudor Companies (Tudor Enterprises, Tudor Construction, and Tudor Intercontinental) contributed \$12,000 per year over the next three years to CAP. "I have been very interested and active in economic development here for quite some time and was even part of a private study about two-and-a-half years ago which was solely oriented toward trying to determine what we needed to do to make life better in Central Louisiana. The economy is the lifeblood of everything that happens here, and so anything that we can do to concentrate on and improve the economy helps the entire community." Tudor believes CAP is a good investment because it has a single focus. "Well, CAP represents a concentrated effort of economic development. And I use the word concentrated because it will be the only entity whose sole purpose is economic development."

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Cenla Advantage Partnership (CAP)

A Sound Investment



Leebo's Stores, Inc. - Lecompte, LA

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Another reason CAP is a sound investment Chatelain tells us is that it will be adequately funded. "I think CAP is the one to invest in because of the fact that we can leverage the dollars from The Rapides Foundation to raise up to half a million dollars a year in grants or matches from the Foundation. So we have the opportunity to fully fund a strong economic development group. And that is something that I don't think we've ever been able to achieve in Central Louisiana."

Harris adds still another reason; the nine-parish service area. "I've got businesses in Leesville and in the rural areas. Sometimes these other organizations are focused on one particular demographic. This nine-parish area can really be a plus because then you have a lot more resources to pitch and with a board made up from that area, there's no telling what we will be able to do here in Central Louisiana."

All three businessmen pointed to the fact that the CAP board will be made up of business people from the private sector as yet another reason they are willing to invest. They like that CAP will be independent and free of political ties. They themselves hope to gain a spot on the Board once it is formed and are prepared to give of their time if called upon to help make CAP a success. Harris says, "It's like a big cluster of businesses and individuals that make things happen. They understand the importance of economic development and they're going to make sure CAP is successful if they're investing in it."

"From my personal standpoint," Tudor says, "I will be involved to the extent that is necessary to make CAP successful. I really think that the Board and the members of the organization will determine the success or failure of it. It's like any organization, it's not going to run on its own. Obviously, the willingness of the Board to be

involved and give the time and effort is absolutely necessary for the success of this organization."

"I think that the exciting thing about CAP," says Chatelain, "is that it is totally owned and operated by the private sector. That means that the private sector is going to want to see some results and see things happening very quickly. So I think we've just got a wonderful opportunity to become the shining star of the state of Louisiana if we'll all work together."

CAP investors know a good deal when they see one and they believe this new organization is it.



Tudor Construction, during renovations at The Rapides Foundation building.



The Rapides Foundation

Grant

Update:

Grants funded by The Rapides Foundation –
working to improve the health and well-being of Central Louisiana.

Healthy Communities

Arts Council of Central Louisiana

Operational support for the continued stability of the Arts Council of Central Louisiana along with equipment replacement fund for The Rapides Foundation Building arts space and the Coughlin-Saunders Performing Arts Center.

\$281,500 3 yrs

Friends of the Alexandria Zoo

To design, develop and implement enhanced educational and docent programs for the Alexandria Zoo.

90,000 2 yrs

Ninth Judicial District Court Hearing Office

To implement a program of education, parenting and employment services and support for non-custodial fathers to encourage financial and emotional support for their children.

300,000 3 yrs

Healthy People

Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Primary Care & Rural Health

To develop 15-20 Rural Health Clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) in Central Louisiana.

\$750,000 3 yrs

D.O.V.E.S. (Domestic Violence & Legal Advocacy Program)

To expand health advocacy services for victims of sexual assault in Natchitoches Parish.

55,000 2 yrs

Playgrounds (Matching Dollars \$1 to \$1)

City of Winnfield

To support development and installation of playground equipment at Grove Street Playground/Sports Complex.

\$10,000

Families Helping Families

To support development and installation of playground equipment for developmentally delayed children behind the Pineville Families Helping Families office located at 2840 Military Hwy.

10,000

Housing Authority of the City of Natchitoches

To support development and installation of playground equipment at two housing sites in Natchitoches.

10,000

Town of Elizabeth

To support development and installation of playground equipment at Finke Park.

10,000



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initiated in 1903.*

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The Rapides Foundation

Walking Trail Program Re-opens

*A Foundation
Mini-Grant Program*



Walking trails are an effective way to get people to exercise. The Rapides Foundation has funded over 25 walking trails and we are currently looking to fund additional trails throughout our Central Louisiana service area.

Contact Kristi Metoyer for more information at 318-443-3394 or 1-800-994-3394.